Our Visions – Our Voices
TESLOntario 33rd Annual Conference

The **Holiday Inn on King** in downtown Toronto buzzed with excitement as nearly 800 enthusiastic teaching professionals gathered for our annual conference, held November 17 - 19, 2005.

The three days and nights were filled with high-energy sessions that spanned the latest in technology applications in ESL, innovative teaching practice, timely and thought-provoking symposia sessions, sparkling plenary speakers, exhibits and demonstrations of new learning materials and a scrumptious Friday night dinner, followed by live entertainment from the show-stopping Second City troupe.

This was also a time for teachers to catch up on important research, share classroom experiences, and renew old friendships.

Drawing participants from across Canada and around the world, our conference enjoyed a high profile in the city of Toronto itself as the signature event of "English as a Second Language Week".

With more than 100 sessions to choose from there was something for everyone: from elementary and secondary teachers , non-credit adult ESL and LINC, to those who work in college and university programs.

The Conference committee under chair Cheryl Richman, ably assisted by Marilyn Johnston, Saskia Stille, Joyce Ivison, Sharon Rajabi and Carolyn Wood, and dozens of volunteers, met and exceeded all the challenges of organizing such a mammoth event within tight budgetary constraints.

Our hats go off to these dedicated professional colleagues. A job well done.

To those who couldn't attend the 2005 Conference, start your plans now to attend the 2006 conference, November 16-18.

About this issue
From the Editor

In this issue of *Contact* we highlight some of the sessions offered at our 30th annual conference in November 2005.

Canadian novelist **Antanas Sileika** hilariously recounts his own introduction to ESL teaching in Paris, while **Barbara Burnaby** catalogues both myths and realities in public policies affecting newcomers to Canada. **Barry Duncan** makes a case for the inclusion of media literacy in ESL programs.

Carolyn Samuels describes an approach to writing instruction that helps students help themselves and **Linda Steinman** reports on a study of five TESL course texts – what they contain and what they miss.

Waifang Wang explores an alternative perspective on ESL learning, placing the focus on students' real needs and the social contexts in which they learn, while **Robert Courchêne** and **Carla Hall describe** the development of an on-line speaking and writing test.

Co-researchers **Lorena Jessop** and **Stephanie Cross** present an innovative rubric for evaluating student pronunciation, and for teachers in need of ideas to prompt regular attendance, **Hosnie Abu-Abed** offers practical tips.

Teachers are sure to be inspired by **Connie Smith** and **Franki Robinson** as they describe how to work with puppets to evoke expressive language from students of all ages.

Classroom activities to enhance collaborative learning within a caring learning environment are shared in the teaching suggestions of **Jill Cummings** and **Huamei Han** as well as the trio of **Lidija Nikolic**, **Diana Catargiu** and **Juliet Daunt**.

Finally, regular contributor **Robert Courchêne** reviews a controversial new book that is animating serious discussion of the role of religious studies in public education.

Contact us

Conference plenary speaker – Canadian writer Antanas Sileika

By Anne Cairns

In the closing hours of the three day marathon that was the TESL Ontario Conference, teachers, heads full of tips and techniques on everything from the latest in ESL software to using puppets and songs in the ESL classroom, sat down to a well-deserved lunch. Little did we know what a treat we were in for as author Antanas Sileika took the stage.

The son of immigrant parents from Lithuania and a former ESL teacher himself, Mr. Sileika is the author of the recent novel, *Woman in Bronze*, a Globe and Mail best book of 2004 and *Buying on Time*, a collection of stories nominated for both the Toronto Book Award and the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour.

Reading from the latter book and sharing his personal anecdotes and reflections, Antanas Sileika was both an entertaining and thought-provoking lunchtime plenary speaker.

Mr. Sileika began by saying that his presence at the conference felt like a homecoming to him after having taught ESL at Humber College from 1977 to 1987, in what he described as the primitive "wild west" years of the profession, when it was assumed that if you could speak English you could teach it.

He and his colleagues, armed with their English Lit degrees, were good-hearted and earnest, and had a joie de vivre that spawned creative ideas, but they had very little training in the field to guide them.

In fact, their handy motto was, "When in doubt, sing!" The overriding lesson taught on those days of song, according to Mr. Sileika, was not an English one, but a very human one.

As nations of the world united in laughter

Author Antanas Sileika at the conference

at the fledgling chorus of teachers attempting "Under the Boardwalk", the learners could only feel their self-esteem grow as they came to realize that indeed there are idiots everywhere! What tone-deaf ESL teacher cannot relate to those awkward yet unforgettable moments!

It is estimated that hearty laughter can burn calories equivalent to several minutes on a rowing machine or an exercise bike!

Mr. Sileika did his best to help us burn off our delicious lunchtime cookies as he related how he got into ESL in the first place. Not surprisingly, it was all on account of love!

Following his girlfriend (who was to become his wife) to Paris in the early 70s, he found himself teaching French engi-

"...two of his students worked more on their budding romance at the back of the classroom than on his lessons..."

Canadian writer Antanas Sileika (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

neers how to express the intricacies of the British water sprinkler system, in English.

With absolutely no idea where to start, his saving grace was the "Teacher's Book" which prompted him, step by tiny step, on how to conduct the class.
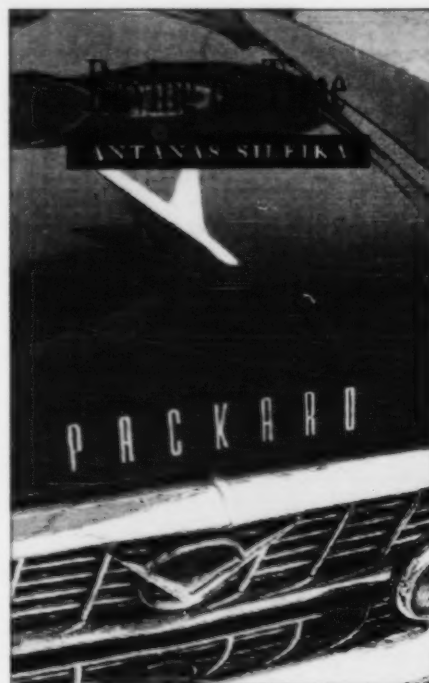
"Enter class. Greet students. Write your name on the board..." What first-time ESL teacher wouldn't covet a manual such as this and follow every directive?

Challenged by a lack of resources (no blackboards, no heat), a lack of interest on the part of the learners (the French government decreed factory workers must have 1 – 2 hours per week of education...in anything!) and a lack of discretion (stereotypically French, two of his students worked more on their budding romance at the back of the classroom than on his lessons), Mr. Sileika certainly found sympathetic ears in the plenary audience and his experiences undoubtedly validated him as one of our own!

Living abroad and struggling with the local language provides any ESL teacher the chance to experience, first hand, what our own learners go through on a daily basis.

Mr. Sileika was happy to share his tips for learning a language – in this case French, which happened to be his worst subject in high school. For vocabulary building, he recommends that if you do not know the word in French, then you can't go wrong by saying the English word with a French accent. Chances are you could be right and if not, people will think you are using a word they themselves don't know!

This tip came with a warning, though, as linguistic "false friends" can lead to awkward moments.

"...he praised his host's cooking by stating how good it was to have food without 'preservatifs'"

At a slightly formal dinner one evening during his sojourn in Paris, he praised his host's cooking by stating how good it was to have food without "preservatifs".

This attempt at gustatory praise turned out to be an utterly embarrassing social social faux pas on his part! (The French word préservatifs, as it turns out, means 'condoms'.)

Having made the successful leap from ESL instructor to writer, Antanas Sileika is currently the Artistic Director of the Humber School of Writers.

His experience as a child of immigrants in 1950s Toronto was the inspiration for his fictionalized account of three brothers growing up with a cultured though depressive mother and a rough, domineering father, both traumatized by liv-

Canadian writer Antanas Sileika (continued)

ing through the Second World War.

He brought his characters alive for us by reading from a chapter entitled "Going Native" which, in its dark humour, captures the deeper psychological and emotional distress of what it was to be a "displaced person" (DP) in Canada, at that time.

As with today's newcomers, the family had to navigate the English language, find work and handle cultural conflict, but at a time when there was much less sensitivity towards, and fewer services for, immigrants.

The anecdote from *Buying on Time* that the author chose to read highlighted the struggles of a poor, immigrant family.

Moreover, it highlighted the often unspoken issue of social standing between "real Canadians" and recent immigrants, who "belonged [slightly lower] on the evolutionary tree...knuckles still scraping the earth."

A paved driveway to play ball hockey on and a lawn resplendant with the luxury of lawn chairs were enough to evoke feelings of envy from the young Sileikas boys who were living a subterranean existence, "like foxes", in the basement of their unfinished house in the Toronto suburb of Weston in 1953.

When their uptight English-Canadian neighbour Mr. Taylor decides he's had enough of the déclassé immigrants and their outhouse next door, he arranges for the building inspector to pay a visit.

Knocking on their underground door with his foot, the inspector explains that the law states they cannot live this way in a winterized basement, due to the risk of the heavy snow causing the flat roof to collapse. Having a newborn baby living in those conditions made the situation even worse.

When Sileikas' father (the "Old Man", as the boys refer to him) then suggests, in his rough manner, that the inspector just take the baby and return him in April after the snows have melted, the inspector asks the Old Man what religion the family is. The Old Man, without missing a beat, replies that they are Church of England.

Despite being nowhere near fluent in English and despite his lack of social graces, both of which mortified the boys, the Old Man knew that to admit to being Roman Catholic would have meant losing his children to the Children's Aid Society. If the Old Man's survival skills had got him through the Second World War, they would certainly get him through any difficulties in establishing a home and a life for his family in Canada.

Antanas Sileika's true gift is in giving voice to the characters that inhabit his life and his stories, through dialogue that captures the essence of the matter in both its pain and its humour.

Indeed, in his world, one seems to predicate the other. His lingering message of finding and appreciating the humour that comes from the "collision of languages" resonates with most ESL teachers everywhere. Each one of us must have a short story or even a book of our own waiting to be written!

Antanas Sileika summed up his plenary address by saluting the audience with respect, admiration and affection for a group he "dares to call his colleagues."

For our part, we are certainly proud that a writer such as Anatanas Sileika, who honours the experience of immigrants in such an authentic and human way, is one of us.

"...the Old Man knew that to admit to being Roman Catholic would have meant losing his children to the Children's Aid Society"

Supporting immigrants for living in a globalized Canada: myths and realities

Presenter: Barbara Burnaby, summary by Sandra Clandfield

All **human experience** happens within a social context in which events and personalities are linked.

Issues that we face today have come out of a web of interrelated events in the past, and in order to understand where we are now, it often helps to know where we have been.

Barbara Burnaby began her plenary address by presenting a summary of noteworthy events in Canada's history since Confederation in 1867.

Each event in one way or another impacted the development of public policies related to education Burnaby's aim was to trace the history of early policy decisions and public initiatives and relate these to their outcomes. She then focused her attention on more recent policies and provisions for supporting non-English-speaking newcomers to Canada through language learning programs and related services.

What became evident in her study was the match - or mismatch - of intentions and outcomes. This tension between myths and realities, she asserts, becomes more and more critical in light of new demands on communication in our globalized economy and social environment.

This session provided us with a historical overview to help us understand not only where we are, but what directions we might take in the future.

Significant in the history of Canada in the late 19th century was the introduction and acceptance of the principle of universal, compulsory and publicly-funded education.

This development was mirrored in western Europe, North America and in the United Kingdom at about the same time. Such a notion was considered foolhardy and radical by some, but its proponents managed to marshall enough influence and opinion that even the British North America Act of

DATE	EVENT
1867	British North America Act
1885	Last spike in the Canadian Pacific Railway
1889-02	Boer War – Canadian division
1901	Marconi transmitted radio waves
1914-1918	First World War - many Canadian men enlisted
1931	Statute of Westminster – granted former British colonies control of foreign affairs
1936	CBC Radio began
1937	First transatlantic airline
1939-45	World War II
1947	Canadian Citizenship introduced
1952	CBC TV began
1960's	Birth Control and Women's Movement
1972	First Anik Satellite

1867 (Canada's founding document) recognized the importance of public education for a developing society, and assigned the responsibility for it to the four provincial governments.

One of the first challenges in establishing a public school system was to separate the church and the state in matters related to education, especially in the running of the schools, which were to be non-sectarian.

The establishment of a public school system did not obviate, however, the already-established private schools that existed for sons of the wealthy classes. In fact, these have continued to exist to this day.

"One of the first challenges in establishing a public school system was to separate the church and the state in matters related to education"

Supporting immigrants (continued)

Public education back in the day: class photo from 1923, Frankland School, Toronto. (Larry Becker collection, on display by the City of Toronto http://www.toronto.ca/archives/becker_collections/educating.htm)

(Continued from page 6)

The establishment of a public school system, however, was seen as a way to differentiate between a school-sponsored liberal education and the training of workers for the economy.

At this time, the Canadian economy was in a transitional phase, shifting from a predominantly agricultural base to a nascent industrial system. The need for workers with at least basic literacy skills was beginning to affect the development of curricula in the various provinces. More children were going to school, and for longer periods of time.

For public schools, standards of achievement were set in the provincial departments of education and those students who could not meet them were failed.

But minority groups within the society and children with disabilities of all kinds were

effectively excluded from access to public education, and all the provinces with the exception of Quebec offered education in the English language only.

The late 19th century also saw the introduction of standards for teachers. Training of teachers was recognized as important for the success of public education, and at the same time new academic disciplines such as psychology and linguistics began to influence not only educational policy but how and what teachers taught in the classroom.

By the early 20th century, some 'progressive' ideas about education were beginning to be implemented in the public school system and there was a wider recognition of the needs of children as an important component of the process.

School systems began to introduce such notions as 'social promotion' and special

"Training of teachers was recognized as important for the success of public education"

Supporting immigrants (continued)
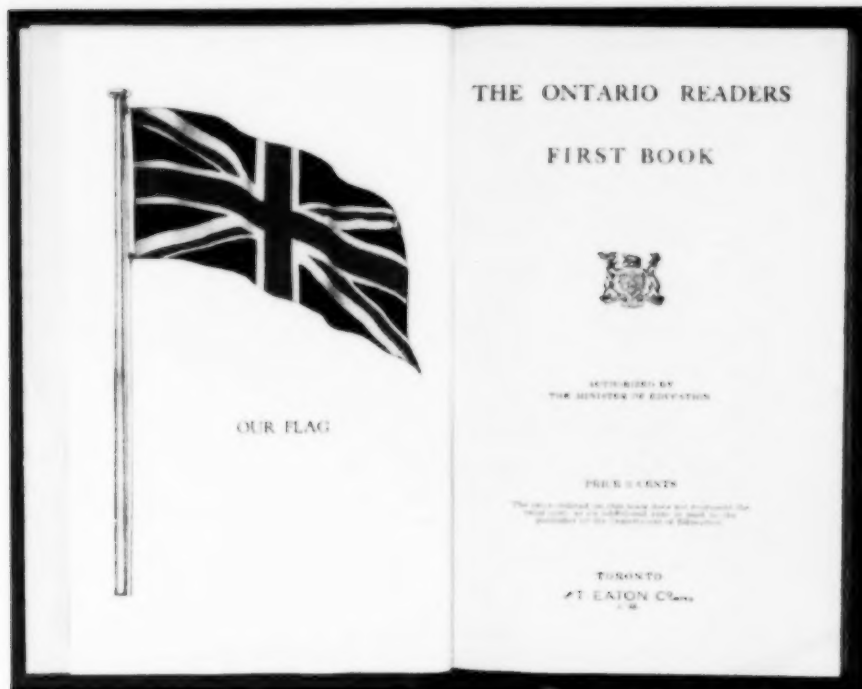
Hail Britannia: 1923 school reader and its British patriotic tone.
(Larry Becker collection, on display by the City of Toronto
http://www.toronto.ca/archives/becker_collections/educating.htm)

> *"The success of French immersion has often been called 'the trial balloon that flew'"*

(Continued from page 7)

education. Some cynically saw these as efforts to mask failure in the schools, but others regarded these innovations as an effective way to balance the sometimes punitive 'top-down' application of educational standards.

With each passing decade school curricula became more elaborate and detailed, more deeply informed by educational research and more precisely focused. In the early decades of the twentieth century schools also began to welcome various minorities, francophones and children with disabilities.

Then in 1965 came a watershed mark in educational innovation in Canada: French immersion was introduced in the Montreal suburb of St. Lambert, at the kindergarten level, in an effort to break down linguistic barriers between English and French Canadians.

Another hope was that the community's anglophone children could become bilingual without any loss of overall educational achievement.

The success of French immersion has often been called 'the trial balloon that flew'. Its implementation, in fact, became a model for many other educational jurisdictions around the world. In addition, during the 1960s schooling was extended to remote communities in the provinces and territories where no schools had existed before.

Over the last five decades, schooling in Canada has become a major portfolio in all

Supporting immigrants (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

provincial and territorial jurisdictions. with large expenditures, specialization of subject matter and better-trained teachers.

However, those developments were accompanied by heavier societal expectations and demands on both teachers and school systems. During this period, too, teachers became more fully professionalized and the granting of teaching credentials was standardized and made more rigorous.

In the 1960s a high school diploma was coming to be seen as a necessary qualification for employment, and academic issues began to have a greater influence on educational theory, teaching practice and the content of school curricula.

In fact, the decades of the 1960s and 70s saw many educational experiments, from how schools were designed and furnished to how new communications technologies - notably film, television and computers - could be effectively used by classroom teachers.

All of this educational ferment was taking place, moreover, in the context of a stable and very prosperous economy. Schools shot up everywhere, and so did teachers' salaries.

Barbara Burnaby then turned her attention to an analysis of issues facing education today. She began by stressing that in both concept and practice schooling is value-laden. It reflects the traditions, transitions and conditions of a society at a given period.

But at the same time, schooling also becomes a target of the economic and social expectations of constituent interest groups within the society, some of which set unrealizable expectations on the system.

Even today the school system struggles to deal with the inclusion of marginal groups within Canada, and advocates for such groups still have to lobby intensely for inclusion, funding, recognition, and adequate educational resources.

DATE	EVENT
1947	Citizenship and Language Education, textbook arrangement between federal and provincial governments
1946-1960	Immigration opened up to people from Eastern and Southern Europe
1960's	"Quiet Revolution" in Quebec, more emphasis on French language and less influence of Catholic Church
1968	Arrival of Czechoslovakian refugees
1969	Official Languages Act – English and French both acknowledged
1971	Multicultural Policy introduced
1972	Arrival of Ugandan refugees
1973	Arrival of Chilean refugees
1970's	Immigrants arrived from very different backgrounds and often in very distressed circumstances
1990	LINC classes began – Immigration increased, disparity between needs of arriving immigrants and provision offered by federal government

One unfortunate effect of the provincial control of education in Canada is that the system of education is divided by jurisdictional boundaries, so that it is often difficult for advocates to be effective. Concerted and coordinated efforts are difficult to arrange.

The new challenges inherent in second language education and ESL in particular are the focus of much discussion and activity at this time. Burnaby asserts that racism and discrimination still exist within the larger society, and this situation affects both access to and success in schooling. Moreover, the federal government's multicultural policy has, as she describes it, "no teeth".

Pockets of our society are still marked by poverty and official neglect, by unemployment and *under*-employment. Economic and social exploitation of women still exists

> *"...schooling also becomes a target of the economic and social expectations of constituent interest groups...some of which set unrealizable expectations on the system.*

Supporting immigrants (continued)

Teachers' professional exams, 1920 (Larry Becker collection, on display by the City of Toronto
http://www.toronto.ca/archives/becker_collections/educating.htm)

"A considerable number of newcomers to Canada still arrive with limited formal education in their first language"

and can be documented with statistics relating to the disparate wages paid to men and women doing the same tasks. There also still exist quite conflicting notions about women's roles in society.

In hiring and accreditation of foreign-educated professionals, the issue of acceptance of foreign credentials continues to animate a struggle, as does the provision of specialized language training for inter-nationally-educated workers.

In addition, a considerable number of new-comers to Canada still arrive with limited formal education in their first language. Their integration into mainstream society, and especially into the workplace is often severely hampered by limited skill in the dominant language.

Moreover, a limited education, insufficient language skills, and unemployment are often co-factors in barring newcomers from access to appropriate physical and psychological health care. In some social

interactions, including schooling and employment, newcomers still confront linguistic discrimination and resistance to the maintenance of their first languages.

On top of that, conflicts continue to erupt around the practice of religious traditions maintained by many new arrivals. Since the catastrophic events of 9/11, for example, people from many Middle East countries have found themselves the targets of discrimination.

Given this scenario, Barbara Burnaby reflected that our institutions often respond to social change in a manner that is far too *ad hoc*, rather than from a coherent set of socio-political understandings.

Neither national declarations nor legislation against it has ended racial discrimination, for example.

Citing the persistent and seemingly intractable English-French tensions, she under-

Supporting immigrants (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

lined the fact that the effects of an early injustice can often last for centuries.

The 1759 Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec, in fact, still reverberates in some Canadians' consciousness and historical memory, and is still a flashpoint used to justify discriminatory social and linguistic discussions in Canada, against Quebecers - 250 years after the fact!

If we fast-forward to the recent devastating havoc of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, we can see the persistent connections between poverty and race, and this in the richest country in the history of the world, our neighbors to the south.

Bringing her plenary address to a close, Barbara Burnaby encouraged each of us to set our own goals high: in short, to be the best possible professional that each of us can be.

This exhortation to sustained professionalism will mean that we must continue to learn as much as we can about our discipline, our communities and especially our students.

Moreover, we need to involve our students in real-life actions and issues of their choice.

She also encouraged us to network with relevant groups within our communities on issues such as health, justice, housing, employment and the media.

As she pointed out, collaboration with other stakeholders invariably brings more effective action and positive results.

To this end she advised us not to wait for funding to get involved in pushing for change, but to take on the responsibility ourselves. And above all, not to forget to document and celebrate our successes along the way.

Barbara Burnaby at the conference

Barbara Burnaby *has worked as a practitioner, researcher and teacher in the fields of English as a second language for immigrant adults, adult literacy, and language in Aboriginal education since the 1960s. Her written work includes classroom support materials, documentation and analysis of language development activities, and studies of Canadian policy development related to languages. Her current work includes the voluntary role as Coordinator of the Canadian Coalition for Immigrant Children and Youth. She has recently retired from regular teaching at Memorial University of Newfoundland, but is staying on as Honorary Research Professor to work with colleagues on a grant to do language development work with the Innu of Labrador.*

"The 1759 Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec, in fact, still reverberates in some Canadians' consciousness "

Media literacy and TESL: creating social, cultural and literacy connections

Presenter: Barry Duncan, summary by Clayton Graves

Barry **Duncan began** his wide-ranging, free-wheeling, media-saturated session with a bold observation: "We teachers have a love/hate relationship with the media. On the one hand, we often see media as demonic, trashy and violent, like a bad video game.

But on the other, we know as teachers that we can use media effectively to connect with our students. And they live, just like us, in a media-saturated environment. So what exactly are we to do?"

In this Plenary Session, award-winning author and media literacy guru Barry Duncan set out to make a case for seriously studying media in ESL programs and even incorporating a media literacy strand in the curriculum, like those in the elementary and high school curricula.

Ironically, in the age of Powerpoint this and Powerpoint that, Duncan chose in this session to rely heavily on those antiques of technology, the overhead projector and video cassette player, both of which worked most of the time.

He tackled one important question head on: why study the media at all?

There are many reasons:

1. The media dominate our political and social experience.
2. Media shape the information that we share
3. In the media we find models for our behaviour, beliefs and values,

"Media provide all of us with a set of common allusions that become points of contact with others..."

"Grease", part of a State of New Mexico media literacy unit taught to Grades 9-12

4. We can increase our enjoyment through media
5. Media study as part of our curriculum can help transform a passive relationship into an active one.

But how is media study related to ESL?

One answer is that media are a major source of acculturation for new Canadians. In fact, in many immigrant homes the television is on all day and half the night.

The very presence of media in all their forms cries out for attention. What images of the world are our ESL students

Media literacy and TESL: creating social, cultural and literacy connections (continued)

(Continued from page 12)

getting from the media, and how are they interpreting those images?

Our identity is fluid and evolving. We are in a state of constantly becoming something that we weren't before. And kids are changing because of media, just as Canada is changing. We are unfinished; in other words, we are a work in progress, so to speak.

Barry Duncan's own guru, media theoretician Marshall McLuhan talked of Canada as a country with a very low profile, in contrast to the culturally much hotter America.

But in their 'hotness' he also finds considerably more cultural arrogance and narrowness of perspective on life.

Ditto for France, which has just recently experienced an explosion of violence and unrest in some suburbs precisely because of cultural closedness and arrogance, where life offers less flexibility to newcomers than Canada does.

Media provide all of us with a set of common allusions that become points of contact with others through conversation, and this is especially true amongst young people.

References to *The Simpsons* and *Friends* are immediately understood by those who are aware, and that includes most people under 30. Common media allusions thus enable talk amongst peers.

The media are dynamic, constantly and rapidly changing as technology presents us with new forms and applications of media and the devices to carry their messages.

It is Duncan's conviction that teachers need to plug into pop culture for a set of reference points with today's students. The internet is now 'where it's at'.

And cell phones are multi-purpose, not only for spoken communication, but for taking and sending photographs, text messaging and watching popular soap operas.

The internet is now 'where it's at, and the latest cell phones are multi-purpose, not just for spoken communication, but for taking and sending photographs, text messaging, and watching popular TV programs.

In a recent trip to China, Barry Duncan noticed people accidentally bumping into each other in Tienanmen Square, so glued were they to their cell phones which now have the capability of broadcasting their favorite soap operas.

In his unscientific, but nonetheless telling survey of subway riders in China, he guessed that at least 50 per cent of subway riders were talking on their cell phones, whereas in Canada it is more like twenty per cent.

Media present images of ourselves to ourselves. They reveal newly emerging currents of thought, belief and lifestyle.

For example, recently-arrived students in Canada are often amazed at how kitchens are portrayed in popular sitcoms and cooking shows.

The image of the kitchen is being

> *"...recently-arrived students in Canada are often amazed at how kitchens are portrayed in popular sitcoms and cooking shows..."*

Media literacy and TESL: creating social, cultural and literacy connections (continued)

(Continued from page 13)

He noted with some irony, in passing, that the sponsoring Canadian company - Molson's - was shortly after taken over the American brewing conglomerate, Coors. And in another ironic note he pointed out that the theme music (Land of Hope and Glory) was actually penned by British composer, Sir Edward Elgar.

"But what does it mean culturally," he asks, "when we use patriotism to sell beer? Or vice-versa." This is the kind of question that media literacy studies explores, and ESL students, he asserts, are not much different from the mainstream in wanting to examine such issues.

Duncan then summarized some key concepts that media studies explore:

shaped and redefined in the media as a large, luxurious space where a lot of daily interaction takes place.

Marketing to teens and 'tweens' is also going full force.

Ad firms devote incredible resources to a process they call 'cool hunting' in efforts to influence young consumers. Teachers who keep up with such developments can help students become better-informed consumers with strong critical skills. Another reason, Duncan claims, to strongly consider adding media literacy studies to the ESL curriculum.

To illustrate the power of advertising, Duncan cited the recently famous 'I am Canadian' beer commercial.

So pervasively did this media product penetrate Canadian consciousness that it has become almost a second national anthem.

• All media products are constructions; they are not accurate reflections of reality.

• Their creators make hundreds of decisions to shape ideas into forms that will not only have appeal, but also move an audience to act and think in certain ways.

• There are invariably commercial implications behind most media products. We need to ask: Who owns and controls the mass media? What level of control of information can a democratic society tolerate?

• Students can benefit from guided and critical examination of media to help them develop critical awareness of sexism, racism, bias and stereotyping.

• Media products reflect an ideology and a set of values. In advertising, for example, the aim is to bring consum-

"'But what does it mean culturally,' he asks, 'when we use patriotism to sell beer?'"

Media literacy and TESL: creating social, cultural and literacy connections (continued)

(Continued from page 14)

ers into a consensual view of such constructs as family structure, male and female roles, social class, maintenance of the status quo, and the permissible use of force.

In the media some people in society matter – they are included- while others are excluded. Who makes those decisions and on what basis?

To amplify some of these concepts, Duncan turned his critical attention to news coverage of both the tsunami disaster in southeast Asia in December 2004 and Hurricane Katrina in September 2005. Media literacy classes couldn't have found more graphic material for critical study than these events if they tried.

From whose perspective were the events covered? Into how much depth did media coverage go? Why do some catastrophes receive minute-by-minute attention while others go virtually unnoticed by the media?

These and other questions need to be asked and media literacy classes can do that.

Duncan then drew a bead on the internet, the gathering place for what is now billions of people around the world.

Personal safety and privacy are just two of the burning issues that should concern everyone who ventures into cyberspace. Media literacy studies have a role to play in informing, advising and protecting young users.

Summing up, Barry Duncan assured everyone that the materials for media
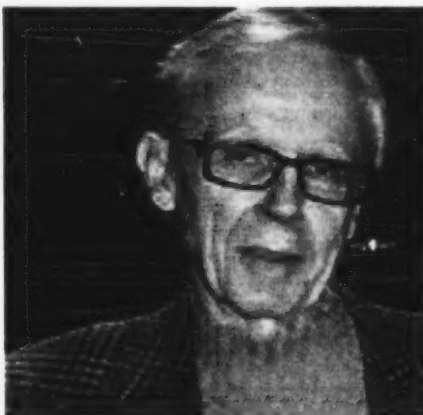
Barry Duncan at the conference

literacy are everywhere. They are as accessible as the teen magazines that line the shelves of the nearest drug store, the so-called 'free' daily newspapers at every bus stop, television, and the internet.

The price to pay for blind acceptance of what the media present to us is high, he charges; ultimately, it boils down to our own freedom. In this plenary address, Barry Duncan made a convincing case for the inclusion of media literacy in ESL courses.

Barry Duncan is the co-author of the best-selling textbook, Mass Media and Popular Culture (Harcourt Canada). He has presented workshops and keynote addresses to teachers in Canada and the United States and at international conferences in the UK, Brazil, Japan, China and Spain. He has written for The Australian Journal of Media and Culture and Orbit, and maintains "Barry's Bulletin" (www.media-awareness.ca) containing news and commentary for media educators. Now semi-retired, he was head of English and Media Arts at the School of Experiential Education in the Toronto Board of Education. He was also a consultant in Media and English for both elementary and secondary schools for the Etobicoke Board of Education.

"The price to pay for blind acceptance of what the media present to us is high"

Student-managed writing correction

Presented by Carolyn Samuel, Faculty of Arts, English and French
Language Center, McGill University, Montreal

Undergraduate students who take English second language academic writing courses in the English and French Language Centre at McGill University are largely Quebec francophones, allophones schooled in Quebec and some international exchange students (Asians, Latin Americans, French from France).

Students are in various disciplines and are already in their degree programs. The courses are three-credit electives; grades are counted in students' GPAs.

There are 39 hours of class time over 13 weeks. A common characteristic among the students is that they are highly motivated.

Students schooled in French in Quebec, by law, do not need to take a language test to study at an English university in Quebec, i.e. they do not study for the TOEFL or any like test.

Many of the students have good aural/oral skills, but weak academic writing skills.

Additionally, most have not developed an adequate vocabulary to talk about writing. This is in contrast to students who do prepare for language tests such as the TOEFL and can readily talk about clauses, parts of speech and so on.

Workshop participants were introduced to a 'self-correction assignment.' The assignment may be done with any piece of student writing: sentences, paragraphs, essays.

The example assignment below begins with the feedback the student has received from the instructor. The editing symbols are those found in most writing textbooks.

> *"...most have not developed an adequate vocabulary to talk about writing..."*

Example sentences are drawn from in-class vocabulary quizzes. Sentences and corrections are courtesy of McGill University English and French Language Centre students. Used with permission.

SPECIAL REPORT: 2005 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Student-managed writing correction (cont'd)

(Continued from page 14)

If students are not using a textbook, the instructor can use a list off the internet.

Additionally, instructors can create a list or tailor an existing one to suit their students' learning needs/goals.

Objectives

The assignment was designed with the following objectives in mind. Students will:

- Clearly see their weak areas with respect to grammar and mechanics.

- Learn to access resources to find solutions to their grammar and mechanics problems.

- Develop a language for talking about their writing.

- Improve their self-editing skills by having developed a meta-cognitive awareness of grammar and mechanics.

It is important that students be taught how to access the resources. To this end, the first time I return written work to students, I hold a class in the computer lab to show students how to access resources in order to complete their self-correction assignments. Resources are all freely available web sites or books in the library.

We look at specific examples, such as which dictionaries indicate count versus uncount nouns and how they do this, which resources have clear explanations of tenses used in conditional sentences, which sites indicate

SYMBOL	MEANING
¶	improper paragraphing
∧	missing word
X	unnecessary word
agr	subject-verb agreement
C	capitalization
cs	comma splice
frag	sentence fragment
p	punctuation
sp	spelling
vt	verb tense
wf	word form
wo	word order
ww	wrong word

"Students do not have to access a broad array of resources to show that they are doing a lot of research"

where adverbs such as "well" and "enough" belong in a sentence and so on. During this class in the lab, students have the chance to familiarize themselves with the resources and ask questions.

Additionally, a sample completed self-correction assignment remains posted to the course web site (WebCT) throughout the semester so that students can refer to the example any time.

One important note is that when using the resources, depth is key and not breadth. That is to say, it is acceptable

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Student-managed writing correction (cont'd)

(Continued from page 17)

if students use one dictionary and one grammar in depth throughout a semester and find answers to all their questions.

Students do not have to access a broad array of resources to show that they are doing a lot of research. Interestingly, students tend toward breadth. Self-correction assignments typically cite a variety of sources.

Another important point is that it is the instructor's task to direct students to resources and it is the students' task to read these resources for answers to their questions. When students do not know where to look or what to look for, I guide them.

For example, I might direct students to investigate verb tenses in conditional sentences, or I might suggest that a punctuation question will be answered at a site dealing with restrictive/non-restrictive clauses.

Step 1: Number the mistakes consecutively. (Note: In the workshop, participants actually did the assignment. Here, the three completed steps are illustrated.)

1. The american law on polluting cars will open the door to a mondial revolution if every states and countries follows it.
2. The criminal paid the price of misbehaving.
3. People who reveal their e-mail address on the Internet will received some junk mails.
4. Because the class was disrupt by a fire alarm, few people were unable to present their work
5. The band turned away his trumpet player.

Step 2: Categorize the mistakes. This will highlight areas that need improvement.

C: 1
wf: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
^: 9
ww: 2, 5, 10

Step 3: Rewrite the corrected sentence with an explanation for each correction and a source. Option: Write another sentence to illustrate that you have understood the correction.

Student-managed writing correction (cont'd)

1. Capitalization
- Correct: The American law
- Reason: "Capitalize names of countries, nationalities, races, languages, and adjectives derived from them. Examples: Germany, Swedes, Indians, French, English countryside"
- Source: Daily Grammar: http://www.dailygrammar.com/306to310.shtml
- Example: Many Canadian people are bilingual.

3, 4. Word form
- Correct: …if every state and country follows (the law)
- Reason: "Every" is followed by singular count nouns, never plural nouns, never non count nouns
- Source: English Plus: http://englishplus.com/grammar/00000027.htm
- Example: Every student should learn this rule.

6. Word form
- Correct: People will receive
- Reason: The future tense employs the helping verbs *will* or *shall* with the base form of the verb
- Source: Guide to Grammar and writing: http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/tenses/simple_future.htm
- Example: My sister will drive me to school.

7. Word form
- Correct: People…will receive some junk mail
- Reason: Junk mail is an uncountable noun
- Source: Cambridge Dictionary: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=43163&dict=CALD
- Example: Since I cancelled my subscription, I don't receive much junk mail.

8. Word form
- Correct: …the class was disrupted
- Reason: The passive forms of a verb are created by combining a form of the verb "to be"with the past participle of the main verb
- Source: Guide to Grammar and Writing: http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/passive.htm
- Example: We were disturbed by the loud noise.

9. Missing word
- Correct: Because the class was disrupted…, a few students were unable to present their work.
- Reason: It is used in a negative way
- Source: LEO: Literacy online: http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/muchfew.html#fewless
- Example: There were a few books on the table; I put them away.

2. Wrong word
- Correct: a worldwide revolution
- Reason: "Mondial" is a French word; adjective
- Source: *Robert & Collins bilingual dictionary*, p. 522
- Example: A worldwide catastrophe is imminent.

5. Wrong word
- Correct: The criminal paid the price for misbehaving.
- Reason: I had a feeling it was: to pay the price "for", but I couldn't find a rule in the dictionary or in the concordance sites. Therefore, I looked for several examples that could allow me to verify my hypothesis. Here are three examples I found:
  1. Paying the price for the Clinton years
  2. Making senders pay the price for spam
  3. Consumers sometimes pay the price for free mail
- Source: Google – entry: pay the price for
- Example: See 1, 2, 3

10. Wrong word
- Correct: The band turned away its trumpet player.
- Reason: "Its" refers to something neutral (the band) and not to someone.
- Source: U. Vic. ELC: http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/330/grammar/poss.htm
- Example: My dog lost its collar.

Student-managed writing correction (cont'd)

(Continued from page 18)

Are the objectives met?

I have not conducted a study to determine to what extent, if at all, the objectives are met. I therefore offer anecdotal conclusions. The first objective is that students will clearly see their weak areas. I believe this objective is met in Step 2.

Sometimes, I need to draw students' attention to the clusters, but they do seem to grasp the notion.

The next objective is that students will learn to access resources to find solutions to their writing problems. I believe this objective is met in Step 3.

Students frequently ask me toward the end of the semester how they can access the resources once the course is over. I would not receive these requests if students had not learned to use the resources and if they had not found them of value.

The third objective is that students will develop a language for talking about their writing. Again, I believe Step 3 meets this objective.

As we get further into a semester, I receive e-mails from students or questions in class asking where they can find information on definite articles or why they had a mistake in a compound-complex sentence when it did have three clauses.

The language students use in these questions – language such as *definite article*, *compound-complex sentence* and *clause* – was largely absent at the beginning of the course when we started doing self-correction assignments.

The fourth objective is that students will improve their self-editing skills by having developed a meta-cognitive awareness of grammar and mechanics. In the

context of a one-semester, 39-hour course, I generally do not see progress in this area.

I attribute this lack of progress, in large part, to students being too rushed during the semester to take the time to self-edit; however, I think the objective and my anecdotal conclusion merit study, particularly given the myriad questions about the value of form-focused feedback.

(For recent literature reviews on the value of grammar, or surface-level feedback on ESL writing, see Diab, 2005 and Macdonald, 2005.)

Here, it is important to note that students receive feedback on the organization and content of their essays in addition to grammar and mechanics.

It is the grammar and mechanics portion that was the focus of this workshop, though.

Questions

Workshop participants wanted to know how long the correction assignments are, how many such assignments students do and how I grade the assignment.

First, length: For my students' in-class vocabulary quizzes, which call for students to write 10 original sentences (compound, complex or compound-complex), the self-correction assignments vary from approximately one to five pages.

For my students' essays, which are between 700-750 words, the correction assignments may be 10-15 pages long.

Instructors can control the length of self-correction assignments, though, by choosing to put editing symbols only over a certain number of mistakes or

> *"It is necessary for students to do several such assignments in order to develop familiarity with the resources and with the terminology used..."*

Student-managed writing correction (cont'd)

over a certain type of mistake.

Second, frequency: In a semester, students do seven self-correction assignments: one for each of their five vocabulary quizzes and one for each of two essays. (Students need not do a self-correction assignment for their third and last essay.)

It is necessary for students to do several such assignments in order to develop familiarity with the resources and with the terminology used in the resources.

Third, grading: A grade for the quiz self-correction assignments is integrated into the actual quiz grade.

That is to say, students receive a grade for the quiz. They then resubmit the quiz with corrections.

A revised grade is assigned based on the corrections. An average of the original grade and the revised grade becomes the final grade.

In the case of the essays, the self-correction assignment is a grade apart from the essay grade. Each of the essay self-correction assignments is worth an additional 5% of a student's grade.

As discussed with the workshop participants, I have not yet found a fully satisfactory way to grade the assignment.

For the moment, I do it impressionistically.

Students who address all the editing symbols to the best of their ability, even though there may be mistakes in several of their correction explanations, get full marks.

Students who write cursory explanations that show either little or no research

earn partial or no marks.

For example, in the case of the editing symbol "C" as in the first mistake in the example sentences above, a student who corrects the sentence and writes, "I needed to write a capital letter" as the reason does not receive marks because there is no explanation for why a capital letter is needed.

Variations

The workshop concluded with a discussion of how participants might adapt the assignment to their student populations.

Additionally, I offered suggestions which included: writing symbols in the left margin and allowing students to locate the mistakes; underlining the mistakes and allowing students to add the symbols; giving audio feedback so that the students listen and fill in the editing symbols; teaching documentation, i.e. proper citation format.

I would like to acknowledge my former colleague, Judith Cocker, who had the initial idea for this self-correction assignment and with whom I had the opportunity to develop it.

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TESL course texts—what's missing?

Presented by Linda Steinman, York University

> "...material used to educate teachers should address issues that learners consider significant..."

There are many voices of authority and influence in the field of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL): language learners; language teachers; teacher educators; language researchers; certifying bodies such as TESL Ontario; and writers, editors and publishers of TESL course textbooks.

In this paper, I will focus on five particular TESL course texts, but I believe that these five may be generally representative of the genre.

First, I will provide a brief overview of the themes/topics generated by the study from which this session is drawn. Then I will describe my findings regarding the five TESL texts.

Overview of my research

The first question I posed in my doctoral research (2004) was "How do learners represent their second language and second culture acquisition?"

My database for this study was a body of published language autobiographies authored by individuals who have crossed languages and cultures.

The six issues or themes that I identified across these autobiographical texts were as follows:

1. *First language loss*

2. *Mind and Body*
   - mind and body connection
   - visceral response

3. *Writing*
   - writing life 1 in language 2
   - writing in a new rhetorical mode

4. *Identity*
   - mobilization of identity
   - third space
   - names

5. *Learning*
   - teachers
   - communicative competence
   - learner's agency

6. *Language prestige*
   - language status
   - family
   - cultural load

I will discuss each of these themes and sub-themes in somewhat more detail in conjunction with the texts. These six areas, then, provided the answer to my first research question.

TESL course texts—what's missing?

When describing their second language acquisition (SLA), the learners/narrativists referred repeatedly to these themes.

The second research question, guided by the results of the first question was: "Does the research literature and do TESL course texts represent the issues that these learners/narrativists named as important?"

If you believe, as I do, that what learners say is important, then you will likely agree that material used to educate teachers should address issues that learners consider significant.

So the six themes and sub-themes became the lens through which I examined selected course texts.

As it happens, at that time of this research I was engaged not only in doctoral work but also in developing a curriculum for an advanced TESL training module at the institution where I was a teacher.

Part of that development involved selecting a course text so I had the opportunity to read many texts closely, both for my "work work" and for my thesis work--a rare and fortuitous opportunity.

Which texts? And why?

I selected five texts on the basis that each was being used as a course text in a number of teacher preparation programs in Canada, the U.S., England, and Australia and that each of these comprehensive texts was under consideration for our own TESL program.

My hypothesis? I expected that the topics that had recurred across the lan-

guage autobiographies would not be represented in a manner that approached the learners' perspectives-- that these texts would be psycholinguistically oriented in the theory sections and skills-based in the pedagogy sections.

Cognition would be stage center, and affect would be backgrounded or absent. These were the texts I examined:

Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by principles*. White Plains, NY: Pearson.

Ellis, R. (1985). *Understanding SLA acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. Essex, UK: Pearson.

Mitchell, R. & Myles, F. (1998). *Second language learning theories*. London: Arnold.

Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

I want to emphasize that I have great respect for these texts and I have depended on them and others like them, regularly and enthusiastically, for information and guidance in my work as a TESL educator.

My task in this study was not to critique them as TESL texts overall, but as either including or excluding the issues raised by the learners in my database of language autobiographies.

Having presented my questions and my database, I turn now to my method.

*"One professor...
cautioned me that it
would not be fair to
make judgments about a
text based on the index"*

TESL course texts—what's missing?

Method of analysis

As I mentioned, I was reading through these texts closely while developing a TESL certificate module.

Shortly thereafter, I did another check of the table of contents and the index and then looked through each text several times for any version of the six themes and sub-themes that had emerged from the autobiographies.

Would just checking the table of contents and index have been enough to make a credible statement about what was and was not included in the text? One professor/textbook writer cautioned me that it would not be fair to make judgments about a text based on the index, for example, because so often the editors unilaterally add to/delete from/change the index.

After reading each text closely and examining the index carefully, I found (or did not find) the following in the five texts with respect to the six themes:

Theme 1: First Language Loss

The learners made clear in their autobiographies that while they were looking ahead to acquiring the new or second language (L2), they were also looking back at their first language (L1) and noting, with some nostalgia, that they were losing facility with the language and losing touch with the people who spoke that language. They also felt distanced from their younger selves.

The learners/narrativists focused on the *feelings* accompanying language loss. Particularly evocative were episodes they described of their L1 being prohibited, disrespected, or ignored during

> *"Is it our job"*, Harmer asked, *"to access the students' inner selves?"*

the acquisition of the L2. (In most, but not all cases, the L2 was English.)

Here is what I found in the five texts with respect to first language loss:

Brown (2001)
Brown noted that native language could facilitate or interfere, but that *"the most salient, observable effect seems to be one of interference"* (p. 65) and advised *"avoiding the first language crutch syndrome"* (p. 66).
Ellis (1985)

The listings under *"first language"* addressed transfer factors almost exclusively. Attention was on the L1 only as it facilitated or hindered acquisition of the L2.

Harmer (2001)
Harmer indexed mother tongue use in class as a sub-heading under *"problem behaviour."* He did, in the three pages devoted to this topic, acknowledge that code-switching between L1 and L2 is naturally developmental and *"not some example of misguided behaviour"* (p. 131). As well, he did cite Atkinson's (1987) suggestion that L1 use could be expeditious in certain activities (Harmer, p. 131). However, Harmer also warned that *"L1 use can result from the teacher's use of L1; therefore, teachers need to be aware of the example they themselves are providing"* (p. 131). There appeared to be no mention of affect in L1 use.

Mitchell and Myles (1998)
There was no listing for "mother tongue" or "language loss" or "first language" in the index to this text, nor discussion of these topics within the text.

Ur (1996)
While not indexed under "problem behaviour," as it was in Harmer's text, mother-tongue use in class appeared in

TESL course texts—what's missing?

this text (p. 122) in a box entitled *"Problems with Speaking Activities."* Ur suggested appointing a monitor to control for *"lapses into the mother tongue"* (p. 123).

Theme 2: Mind and Body

The learners/narrativists made it clear that learning was not only an in-brain activity for them. Acquiring a new language was often represented as a multisensory event—physical and emotional as well as cognitive. Learners/narrativists discussed feelings of constriction at various points in their bodies, and visceral responses of dislike to certain words or elements of a language. These visceral responses were unrelated to knowing the structure or word; that is, the individual *knew* it but resisted it.

I first looked for the following words in the index: body; mind/body; emotions; affect; liking; resisting; avoiding; anxiety. I then perused the whole index of each book in case any of these words were subsumed into another category.

Brown (2001)
Brown did address affective issues, but not as the learners described them. Actual physical reactions were not mentioned in this text.

Ellis (1985)
The index did not list mind/body, affect, or physical response.

Harmer (2001)
While "Mind" or "Body" or "Mind and Body" did not appear as an entry in the index, I was initially heartened to see a short section of the last chapter headlined *"Mind and Body"*. However, it turned out that the section dealt with teacher stress and advised teachers to take care of their voices.

Under *affective variables*, Harmer presented a dilemma relevant to the comments made by the learners/narrativists. He suggested that one way for students to feel relaxed is for the teacher to speak to the whole person, not just to the language learning element.

In a humanistic classroom, students are encouraged to reflect on how learning happens: *"Learning a language is as much an issue of personal identity, self-knowledge, feelings and emotions as it is about the language"* (pp. 74–75).

Harmer then presented the controversy around students *"exteriorizing their own internal texts"* (Morgan & Rinvolucri, 1986, p. 9, cited in Harmer, 2001, p. 75). *"Is it our job"*, Harmer asked, *"to access the students' inner selves?"* There may be a cultural issue here, Harmer suggested, but warned that attention to this area may overemphasize personal language at the expense of other kinds of language, and teachers may neglect the students' cognitive and affective development.

Harmer asks: *"How far do we act as quasi-therapists?"* (p. 75). This is an important question! I respect the raising of this issue; my reaction, however, is that the learners are generally able to monitor how much they wish to reveal. As well, revelation is not necessarily the pedagogical intent; awareness is.

A teacher would be unlikely (and certainly unwise) to devote an entire program to self-disclosure of a personal nature.

I certainly agree that a teacher who deals only with affective issues impoverishes the language of his or her students; however, in my view, so does a teacher who deals only with linguistic/cognitive issues.

Ur was concerned about "invasions of privacy" and "touchy feely activities"

TESL course texts—what's missing?

Mitchell and Myles (1998)

Affect was mentioned on page 171; the authors quoted from a learner's diary about how she felt when she spoke English. There was no mention of physical manifestations.

Resistance was given half a page, linking it to self-esteem (p. 70). *Anxiety* (under learner differences) alluded to physical responses: language anxiety "*is typified by self-belittling, feelings of apprehension, and even bodily responses such as a faster heartbeat!*" (p. 19). (The exclamation mark is the authors' – as though it were a surprise.)

I searched for "constraints in interlanguage"; "attitude", but found nothing similar to the learners' comments. *View of the learner* (*p*. 19) seemed promising, but proved to be the linguist's view of the learner regarding Universal Grammar.

Ur (1996)

The words "body" and "affect" did not appear. *Emotions* appeared as a type of talk that is not encouraged enough in classroom interactions; such talk was contrasted with *transactional* talk.

Cultural content was listed in the index, and here Ur offered a caution about how much one should raise this in the classroom (similar to Harmer's concern indicated earlier). Ur was concerned about "*invasions of privacy*" and "*touchy feely activities*" (p. 208).

I do feel that there is a difference between discussing how you feel about your mother or about abortion, and the more situationally- relevant questions concerning how a student feels about this element, this function, or this structure of the English language.

While "liking" was not listed, *enjoyment* was. Ur discussed enjoyment of class-

room activity, as well as whether this always means that learning is taking place. But enjoyment of the new language itself (or parts of the language) was not mentioned.

Theme 3: Writing

Two distinct writing-related issues emerged. The first was the challenge (and in some cases, the relief) of writing about life 1 in language 2.

These second language writers described the presence of an accent in writing and considered whether this seepage was intentional or not. Several narrativists discussed the expectations of each of their writing communities--L1 and L2--and wondered to which they belonged. The second issue was the complexity of the process of learning to write for academic purposes in a foreign language and for a foreign audience.

Brown (2001)

In his chapter on teaching writing, Brown did list and address contrastive rhetoric (writing across cultures). He presented Kaplan's (1966) often-cited diagrams and acknowledged that while simplistic and overly general, Kaplan's doodles did point to the presence of a writer's potential predispositions in writing and the undeniable effect of culture and years of schooling, reading, and writing in a particular context:

> *One important conclusion ... is the significance of valuing students' native language rhetorical traditions, and guiding them through a process of understanding those schemata while not attempting to eradicate them* (Brown, 2001, p. 338).

I believe his brief comments in this chapter of his book do reflect the points made by the narrativists.

Harmer surprisingly suggested that creating an English atmosphere in the classroom might reduce use of L1 and that "anglicizing our students' names was one way of creating this atmosphere"

TESL course texts—what's missing?

Anglicization of names emerged as a surprisingly robust sub-theme across the narratives.

Ellis (1985)
Neither *contrastive rhetoric* nor the other writing-related issues discussed by the authors of the narratives in my study appeared in this text. Although he does not state this focus in the introduction to the book, Ellis devotes his attention in this text to *oral* language.

Harmer (2001)
There was no listing for "contrastive rhetoric", either by itself or under *writing*. I was unable to locate any reference to the writing issues raised by the narrativists.

Mitchell and Myles (1998)
This text did not address contrastive rhetoric, nor the other writing issues considered significant by the narrativists in this study. Similar to Ellis, the authors of this text attend to oral language rather than written; they do not, however, ar-

ticulate this focus in the introduction.

Ur (1996)
"Contrastive rhetoric" did not appear as a listing anywhere in Ur's text, and the chapter on *writing* did not address any of the writing issues raised by the narrativists.

Theme 4: Identity

How and where do language and culture crossers situate themselves, identify themselves—how are they identified or classified by others?

'Third' has become a ubiquitous adjective in identity studies in SLA. Canagarajah writes about the third way (hybrid, reconfigured discourse); LoBianco, Liddicoat, and Crozet (1999) about a third place; Kramsch (1998) about a third culture; Bhabba (1994) about the third space, and third face (Mao, 2004, p. 50).

In my study, I adopted LoBianco's *et al*'s notion of a post- modern space where histories are suspended and new possibilities entertained—neither Culture1 nor Culture 2 nor a hyphenated version of the two, but rather a new concept of self.

If you look back at the list of themes, you will note that another sub-theme under *Identity* is *names*.

The preservation of and Anglicization of names emerged as a surprisingly robust sub-theme across the narratives.

There is no listing for "identity" in Brown (2001), Ellis (1985), Harmer (2001), or Ur (1996). Mitchell and Myles (1998) include several listings for *identity*, but none of the information related to identity as experienced by and commented on by the learners/narrativists.

There is no listing for "names" in Brown (2001), Ellis (1985), or Mitchell and

"[Brown acknowledged that] accent-free speech that is indistinguishable from that of a native speaker was unattainable for virtually every adult learner and that accents in the multilingual world were quite acceptable."

TESL course texts—what's missing?

(Continued from page 27)

Myles (1998).

Harmer, surprisingly suggested that creating an English atmosphere in the classroom might reduce use of L1 and that *"anglicizing our students' names was one way of creating this atmosphere"* (p. 133).

The Ur (1996) text looked promising, as it did have this entry in the index: *Names, of students, teachers' knowledge of.* But the two pages indicated made no mention of names at all.

I checked through the most likely chapters and found nothing except in a chart on practical hints for classroom discipline; number 3 of 22 hints read "Know and use the students' names" (p. 263).

Theme 5: Learning

Three sub-themes were:

1. *Teachers*: most entries related once again to teachers' attitudes and behaviours towards the student's L1 and culture 1 and the influence of these attitudes and behaviours

2. *Communicative competence*: learners described their own notions of when it was and why it was that they had developed competence in the second language.

3. *Learners' agency*: the narrativists had all described situations in which they made wilful decisions, not based on competence, as to whether they would engage in or resist language learning.

Brown (2001)

Brown addressed teaching strategies and characteristics of good teachers, but among these, understanding and including the language/culture of the students was not included.

No mention was made of a personal view of communicative competence. In the chapter on "Teaching Speaking", Brown addressed the limits to which an individual may be willing or able to achieve certain levels of pronunciation.

He acknowledged that accent-free speech that is indistinguishable from that of a native speaker was unattainable for virtually every adult learner and that accents in the multilingual world were quite acceptable. *"Accents have become almost irrelevant ... one's accent is a symbol of ... heritage"* (p. 284).

Ellis (1985)

Ellis did not address the broader cultural issues involved in teaching. The index listing under Teacher was "teacher talk." L1 use was presented psycholinguistically – again, the linguistic reasons for not using the L1 rather than the social cultural reasons for using it. Teacher–learner interaction regarding the L1 was not discussed in this text.

A personal view of communicative competence was not mentioned.

The agency of the learner and his/her will to retain elements of L1 was not addressed in the discussion of motivation within the chapter on individual differences (chap. 5) or in his chapter on interlanguage.

Harmer (2001)

This text, on the other hand, had many listings under *Teachers*. Most dealt with the role of teachers as motivators, role models, and so on.

Under the title *"Please Speak English"* (pp. 131–132), Harmer presented a short review of current thought on L1 in the classroom; depending on the level of the student, the nature of the task, the difficulty level of the task, use of L1 might be acceptable.

Although liberal in this regard, Harmer

> *"At best the materials were unreflective and at worst disrespectful and dismissive of the time, of the place and of the nature of the people learning"*

TESL course texts—what's missing?

did not suggest acknowledging and building on the L1. Nowhere is the attitude of the teacher towards the language and the people who speak that language named as an important consideration.

A personal view of communicative competence was not mentioned. Harmer covered the issue of learner agency with respect to pronunciation nicely.

On teaching pronunciation: *"Many students do not especially want to sound like native speakers ... want to retain their own accent when they speak the foreign language because that is part of their identity"* (p. 184). He commented that, in view of this, intelligibility should be the aim of the classroom teacher.

Mitchell and Myles (1998)
This text did not address the background and behaviour of the teacher insofar as they affect language learners. Oddly, there was no listing in the index for "Teachers" or "Teaching", only *Teachability hypothesis*.

Granted, this text is entitled *Second Language Learning Theories*, and is not limited to language learning in a classroom context.

The text is, however, used to prepare teachers for the classroom. No mention was made of the language learner's personal view of communicative competence.

The authors addressed the affective factors of language motivation and attitude on page 19. Drawing on Gardner and MacIntyre (1992), Mitchell and Myles wrote that motivation and learning correlated.

Motivation in SLA seemed most often to be understood as motivation to acquire and to conform, rather than as an individual blend of desire to learn and desire to resist.

Ur (1996)
Level of authority and teacher as motivator were mentioned, but not teacher attitudes towards the students' home language and people who speak that language. *Mother tongue* appeared on only two pages.

Mother tongue use appeared in a chart labelled *"Problems with Speaking Activities,"* fourth on the list after *"inhibition," "nothing to say,"* and *"low or uneven participation."* This seemed to indicate that speaking in the L1 is equivalent to saying very little at all.

A suggestion Ur made is to appoint a monitor and to rely on nagging. Ur did acknowledged that learners might want to retain a slight accent from their L1 and that native-like pronunciation may not be a realistic goal (p. 52).

Theme 6: Language Prestige

Language status; role of family; cultural load of material are the three sub-themes here.

Critical theory underlies much of this section. While English was accorded the most attention as the language of status - *"English is the changing machine"* a quote from narrativist Edward Said (1999, p. 236) – the status of other languages was addressed as well.

For example, narrativist Karen Ogulnick in her autobiography *Onna Rashiku* (1998) discussed how the Japanese language ascribed less power to women.

The attitude of the narrativists' families towards the home language and other languages were also described as strong influences on learning. Narrativist Julia Alvarez wrote: *"My mother's Americanophile family was the dominant influence"* (1999, p. 149).

"Many students...want to retain their own accent when they speak the foreign language because that is part of their identity"

TESL course texts—what's missing?

"Why did not a single book I read in high school tell the story of a people who looked like me or set in landscapes familiar to me?" asked one writer.

"The results, while not surprising to me, were nevertheless disappointing"

One powerful way in which the status of English is transmitted is through the materials used to teach it—i.e. the cultural load.

At best the materials were unreflective and at worst disrespectful and dismissive of the time, of the place and of the nature of the people learning.

Narrativist Elizabeth Nuñez, who grew up in Trinidad asked: *Why did not a single book I read in high school tell the story of a people who looked like me or set in landscapes familiar to me?"* (2000, p. 41)

Brown (2001)
Power was not listed in the index. C*ritical*

pedagogy was listed, but was addressed in a cursory way across two pages in the final chapter of the text.

Ellis (1985)
Neither "critical theory" nor "power" appeared in the index to this text.

Harmer (2001)
Harmer addressed imperialism and the place of English at the beginning of his text – an impressive positioning that, I believe, accorded the topic a framing status. He mentioned Pennycook (1998), Crystal (1997), and Graddol (1997) in his discussion on cultural imperialism, linguistic imperialism, varieties of English, and English as an international language.

Harmer touched on the tension between the view of Bisong (1995), who said that great writers like Achebe do not write in English as victims but out of choice, and those, like Phillipson (1996), who respond that it is not a free choice but determined by audience (Harmer, 2001, p. 5).

Harmer addressed the status of Received Pronunciation in England and recommended that teachers investigate students' purposes for learning English in order to adjust the amount and the nature of cultural information to include in the educational program.

Mitchell and Myles (1998)
There was an index listing for *power relations.* Across several pages, the authors addressed gate-keeping and the lack of empowerment felt by minority language groups, in the workplace as well as in the classroom. Ethnic and gender affiliations, the authors acknowledged, may inhibit opportunities for speaking, learning, and for decision-making.

Ur (1996)
"Critical theory" was not listed in the

TESL course texts—what's missing?

index. Ur included three pages under the index listing *Power hierarchies*, but hers was a very limited definition of power as she referred mainly to power asserted by teachers in feedback situations (two pages) and devoted one page to a discussion of the power of teachers in discipline issues.

I will summarize how these five texts fared when interrogated for the six issues raised by the narrativists.

First language loss was ignored by all, as was *Identity*. *Mind/Body* received some limited attention in Mitchell and Myles. Brown addressed *contrastive rhetoric* quite nicely; Brown and Harmer addressed the *agency* of learners to engage and resist; and both Harmer and Mitchell and Myles touched on *language prestige*. The results, while not surprising to me, were nevertheless disappointing.

I have increased my efforts to work beyond the text so that learner perspectives in general, and the perspectives that were significant to the learners/narrativists in my database in particular, are brought to prospective teachers for consideration and discussion.

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Self and Society beyond the ESL classroom —an alternative view of ESL teaching and learning

Presented by Haifang Wang, Queen's University

A **traditional perspective** on teaching and learning a second language (English as a second language, in this case) is that it is "code-based".

In this view, teachers encourage "a focus on the second language as formal code, referenced to native-speaker proficiency as "the norm" (McKay and Wong, 1996, p.577), and learners are often taught to master the rules of that language, in an effort to become proficient users.

This approach focuses on the results of learning, with the goal of training the learners to be as fluent as the native speakers.

A relatively recent trend in ESL learning is emerging, however, which conceptualizes the second-language learner as a complex social being (McKay and Wong, 1996).

In this conception, teachers and researchers put more attention on the learning process rather than the results, placing the language learner in a social context in which the second language is learned and used.

Rather than isolating ESL learners from the wider social background and regarding them as a 'special' group, this approach views ESL learners as social beings like other individuals, having social lives and living within complex social realities.

It examines self-identity and social

> "...this approach views ESL learners as social beings like other individuals, having social lives and living within complex social realities"

power relations beyond the ESL classroom, and suggests some new thinking about the design and improvement of ESL curricula and evaluation.

Because of the dramatic increase in the number of immigrants to North America, ESL programs exhibit more complexity due to the diverse backgrounds and identities immigrants bring to the classroom.

However, many ESL teachers still tend to conceptualize L2 learners "as a linguistically diverse group (from non-English-speaking backgrounds) but with similar language learning needs" (Leung, Harris and Rampton, 1997, p. 543). Leung et al. call such assumptions both inadequate and misleading.

The reality of the immigrant identity and language in the ESL classroom is far more complicated.

Out of this discussion, and from a different perspective, a new concern emerges related to identity and power relation.

In this paper, I survey the research literature focusing on identity and power relations issues in immigrants' ESL learning.

My goal is to help ESL teachers gain a better understanding of their students' complex identities and desires, and the power relations happening in the classroom which can influence students' performance.

Self and Society (continued)

Identity and ESL Teaching and Learning

Identity has been explored by many sociologists, psychologists and other social scientists.

Here, I want to apply Norton Pierce's (2000) definition of identity as a guideline for the discussion. Norton Pierce uses the term identity to refer to "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p.5).

This definition not only stresses the historical and social construction of identity (through time and space), but also pays attention to the dynamic process of identity development.

Norton Pierce's definition is based on that of Weedon (1997) where an individual's identity is described as "multiple, non-unitary, a site of struggle, and changing over time. (p.32)"

Identity and language — Gails and Johnson (1987) indicate that language is a salient marker of group membership and social identity. International sociolinguist Heller (1987) also focuses on language in her research of social identity.

She believes that language and ethnicity interact in several ways, and that language choices serve to indicate social relationships based on shared or unshared group memberships and help to form social identity in specific contexts (Hansen and Liu, 1997).

In exploring the relationship between language and identity, the well-known French sociologist Bourdieu (1977) argued that the value ascribed to speech cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks, and the person who speaks can not be understood apart from larger networks of social relationships — many of which might be unequally structured. Bourdieu insisted that the definition of competence should include "the right to speak" or "the power to impose reception" (p. 648).

Due to the close connection between identity and language, we must take into account the role of identity when we analyze the process of language learning, including the second language acquisition process.

Identity and ESL in Practice — ESL teaching and learning in countries like Canada is very complicated, and this complexity often challenges ESL teachers' thinking and nudges them to revisit their assumptions about students' languages and cultures.

Sometimes, although both parents in a family may be immigrants from India and the language used in the home is Gujarati, the children in the family do not necessarily regard themselves as Indian, and may in fact speak English better than Gujarati (Leung, Harris and Rampton; 1997).

Nero, in his (1997) research on some English-speaking Caribbean immigrants to the US and Canada, even suggested that anglophone Caribbean students should be treated as neither native speakers of English nor ESL students. For various historical reasons, the mass vernacular in parts of the anglophone Caribbean is a variety of

> *"Sometimes, although both parents in a family may be immigrants from India... the children in the family do not necessarily regard themselves as Indian"*

Self and Society (continued)

(Continued from page 33)

English-based Creole.

All the participants in Nero's research considered themselves native speakers of English, for they were fully aware of the stigma attached to nonstandard speech.

However, at home and in the informal domain, all but one admitted to speaking "broken English" or "patois" (p. 589).

Their situation is somewhat complex. One the one hand, the Creole speakers' knowledge of standard English far exceeded that of true nonnative speakers of English because of the constant interaction of Creole and English.

As a result, traditional ESL classes did not really address their linguistic needs.

On the other hand, since the Creole-speaking students considered themselves native speakers of English, they had less motivation to learn standard English within the conventional methodology of traditional ESL classes. What should the educator do in this case?

This picture becomes more complicated during the period of immigrants' acculturation and negotiation in the host environment.

Norton Pierce (1995) cited the example of Eva, a Polish refugee to Canada, to reveal how identity and its change would influence an individual's English language learning and use.

When Eva first came to Canada and worked in a restaurant as a cleaner, her co-workers rarely talked to her and she always kept silent in the workplace. She attributed this to her inadequate

"...one day a man said 'Are you putting on this accent so that you can get more tips?'"

English and her low-level position.

Later, she tried to find chances to talk with her colleagues about her life in Europe and even answered their questions.

After one year, when one day a man said "Are you putting on this accent so that you can get more tips?", Eva spoke out. "I wish I did not have this accent because then I would not have to listen to such a comment" (p. 25).

Here, Norton Pierce pointed out that in Eva's response, "she was claiming the right to speak as a multicultural citizen of Canada" (p. 25).

Actually, Eva's status in Canada had not changed; what had changed was her self-concept or identity—from a subservient refugee to a self-assertive multicultural citizen—which at last led to her different attitude towards people around her and more confident English language use.

In contradistinction to the research of Norton Pierce, which focused on adult immigrants' ESL learning and use, McKay and Wong (1996) studied migrant Chinese children.

McKay and Wong applied the concepts of multiple discourse and multiple identities to the English learning of four Chinese adolescent immigrant students (Michael, Jeremy, Brad and Jessica).

The discourse models they used in the research were characterized as minority discourse, colonialist/racialized discourse towards immigrants, Chinese cultural nationalist discourse, social and academic school discourse, and gender discourse.

In McKay and Wang's research, Mi-

Self and Society (continued)

(Continued from page 34)

chael was getting C's and D's in ESL, especially in writing, though he received A's in other courses.

His proficiency in sports, however, fit into the gender expectation of American school subculture and helped him win friends of various racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Michael's lack of dedication to English was quite understandable. Since he was gaining enough satisfaction from his multiple social identities as both athlete and popular friend, he did not feel compelled to develop further as a scholar simply to placate his parents and teachers by perfecting his academic writing skills.

Similarly, in Jessica's life music played a central role. Her father was a pastor in a Chinese community church, and music was a tradition in the family. Jessica was an accomplished pianist, played cello and sang in the school choir. She spent more time on music than on homework, and her musical talent gained her respect among school friends.

At home, her father asked her to speak Chinese. Jessica's case suggested that her commitment to learning English might have been affected by her high investment in her musical aspirations as a source of personality.

In contrast, for Jeremy the dominant influence on his attitudes and behaviors appeared to be social discourse and academic school discourse.

He was always attentive and obedient in class, worked hard, and relied on the strength of his scholarly identity to gain general acceptance and respect. He was a good academic performer and made great progress in his English learning.

The researchers as a whole point to the conclusion that learners are extremely complex social beings with a multitude of fluctuating needs and desires.

Immigrant status is only one dimension of the ESL learner's identity. Immigration to another country does not necessarily mean that the immigrants will acculturate to the host culture and language or even that they take it on as the central goal of their lives.

Power Relations in ESL Teaching and Learning

In the discussion on identity and ESL learning, the word "power" is frequently mentioned. According to Norton Pierce (2000), power here refers to "the socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions and communities through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced, distributed and validated" (p. 7).

Foucault (1980) argued that power did not operate only at the macro level of institutions such as the legal system or the education system, but also at the micro level of everyday social encounters between people with differential access to symbolic and material resources that are inevitably negotiated through language.

Although it is crucial for language learners to understand the rules of the target language, it is equally important to explore whose interests the rules serve.

"Immigration to another country does not necessarily mean that the immigrants will acculturate to the host culture and language "

Self and Society (continued)

(Continued from page 35)

What is considered appropriate usage is not self-evident but must be understood with reference to relations of powers between interlocutors. The unequal power relations between interlocutors often becomes an element behind the motivation of the ESL learners.

Power Relations in ESL Teaching and Learning Practice

Status of ESL programs and learners - ESL in some schools is regarded as marginal, a "dummy program" (McKay and Wong, 1996, p.581). Amin (1997) also pointed out that new immigrants who are learning English are defined as "others," as "culturally and linguistic inferior" (p. 581), and Hunter (1997) found that the immigrant students may be labeled by the school as "deficient" in language and literacy, and even as "at risk".

Through language, learners gain or are denied access to social networks where opportunities for speaking are created.

McKay and Wang (1996) analyzed the power relations from the colonialist/racialized discourse model.

In this discourse, non-white immigrant students were considered more problematic than those who could readily "pass" into the mainstream, whether the problems were attributed to cultural background, motivation, or some other factors. English-speaking ability was felt to be an index of cognitive maturity, sophistication, and general personal worthiness.

One of the teachers in the studies treated the apparently assimilated students (or those thought to have a greater potential for assimilation) more kindly than the students who spoke with heavily-accented English and less westernized behaviors.

With the centrality of a westernized set of values and behavior and English proficiency, the ESL students were positioned at a disadvantage, having less "cultural capital".

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital covers a wide variety of resources "including verbal facility, general cultural awareness, information about the school system, and educational credentials" (Swartz, 1997, p. 198).

Cultural capital is not equally distributed, and even prolonged exposure to instruction does not fully compensate for the initial handicap in cultural capital.

Since "schools offer the primary institutional setting for the production, transmission, and accumulation of the various forms of cultural capital" (Swartz, p. 189), ESL learning for immigrants is a crucial acquisition that will enable them to acquire cultural capital in the host country or new environment, without which they will become even more powerless.

From this perspective, if ESL teachers had a better understanding of the power relations in the classroom, they might also have a clearer idea of what is happening with their students, and make efforts to create more opportunities for them to learn and use the target language.

Cultural stereotypes — The ESL classroom presents a complicated picture, and it is still not free from cultural stereotypes. For example, immigrant

"...non-white immigrant students were considered more problematic than those who could readily 'pass' into the mainstream"

Self and Society (continued)

Asian students are often described as "obedient to authority, lack critical thinking skills, who do not participate in classroom interaction" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 710).

These kinds of stereotypes are harmful generalizations and greatly oversimplify what is a complex situation. Actually, Asian students are often "extremely active and even aggressive" (p. 711), and very good critical thinkers.

If they do adopt the passive attitudes claimed by some, it is more likely to be a consequence of related second language issues and the characteristics of different educational contexts rather than any inherent disposition within the students themselves.

Young (1990) conducted a study on the classroom interactional behavior of native English speakers learning an L2 (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Japanese).

He found that these students, too, experienced a debilitating level of anxiety and hesitancy to interact when compelled to use their second languages, which was still developing.

In fact, the second language learning process itself exerts pressure on learners, and likely explains their reduced participation in classroom activity, rather than any inherent disposition derived from culture or even personal conditions.

The two research findings both called for ESL teachers to exhibit more attention and sensitivity to this issue.

Borden (1991) pointed out that negative stereotyping resulted from shallow perceptual identities. Zou (2002) pointed out that "Stereotyping culturally different children is not just an expression of a colonial mentality but an active process of distortion of their self-identity that damages their confidence and reduces their opportunities for success" (p. 253).

Responsive educators have to challenge the linguistic and cultural stereotypes in the ESL classroom so that they can be more open to their students' healthy development, both linguistically and mentally.

Ownership of English — Besides the power relations in the learning environment discussed above, another source of power relations derives from the language itself; that is, "Who owns English?"

As an international language, does English belong to native speakers of English, to speakers of Standard English, to white people, or to all of those who speak it, irrespective of their linguistic and sociocultural histories?

This question is important for ESL teachers and learners, because "if the English learners could not claim ownership of that language, they might not consider themselves as legitimate speakers" (Bourdieu, 1977).

Helping all students claim ownership of the language they are learning is thus becoming another part of the ESL teacher's responsibilities.

In their empirical research, Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997) found that white, monolingual English-speaking teenagers did not necessarily use only Standard English, and this led them to suggest renaming the notions of *native speaker* and *mother tongue* with the terms *language expertise*, language

> *"These kinds of stereotypes are harmful generalizations and greatly oversimplify what is a complex situation"*

Self and Society (continued)

(Continued from page 37)

Haifang Wang

inheritance, and *language affiliation.*

In doing this, they ask educators to abandon the binary native-speaker-versus-others duality, and develop a more appropriate classroom approach based on an awareness of learners with different needs.

Amin (1997) found that some language learners assumed that only white people were really Canadian, and only the white Canadian people could be native speakers with a valid claim to ownership of English, and only they could speak with authenticity and authority.

This assumption discourages not only ESL learners, but also non-native ESL teachers.

The exclusive association of the native speaker with ownership of English and good pedagogy disempowers nonwhite teachers, who have been identified as nonnative speakers, simply and mistakenly on the basis of their race.

The researcher emphasizes, furthermore, that there is no intrinsic connection between race and ability in English.

For teachers who speak English as a second language there may be even more disadvantages. However, these teachers' own ESL experience could actually play a valuable role in ESL students' learning.

As Tang (1997) noted, a shared mother tongue can be a useful instructional tool in teacher-student interactions, especially for younger students and less able language learners.

At the same time, the teachers' previous L2 learning experiences help them to understand students' problems.

Significance for ESL Teachers

For ESL teachers the most significant outcome of analyzing ESL teaching and learning from the perspective of self-identity and social relations is to offer them a new dimension for understanding what really happens in their classrooms, what influences the learner's performance or choice between speaking and silence, and what students really need or desire in their English learning process.

ESL learners, like any other individuals, have complex social identities that must be understood in the context of larger, and frequently inequitable, social structures present in their day-to-day social interactions.

English learning is not only the learning of grammatical rules and vocabulary, but also the claiming of the right to speak and ownership of the second language, both of which are elements of competence. Students need teachers' help and encouragement in this process of self-empowerment.

Finally, Norton (1997) argues that "I suggest that if English belongs to the people who speak it, whether native or nonnative, whether ESL or EFL, whether standard or nonstandard, then the expansion of English in this era of rapid globalization may possibly be for the better rather than for the worse" (p. 427).

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> *"English learning is not only the learning of grammatical rules and vocabulary, but also the claiming of the right to speak and ownership of the second language"*

Self and Society (continued)

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Developing a Computerized Speaking and Writing Test

Presented by Carla Hall and Robert Courchéne, University of Ottawa

involved in L2 teaching and learning.

For the 2005-2006 academic year the University of Ottawa will offer close to 30 immersion courses to students who would like to study content courses in their second language with the support of second language instruction.

The anticipated growth in enrolment in these courses (40+ courses for 2006-2007) means that there will be a need for an efficient and effective language testing program to place students in the appropriate level of immersion courses and to assess the gains made in these courses.

While for a number of years the university has had an online proficiency test that evaluates receptive skills, no such test existed for the productive skills.

The goal of this project was to create a computerized speaking and writing test that could be administered to a large number of students while at the same time obtaining as rich a speech and writing sample as possible.

"The anticipated growth in enrolment ...means that there will be a need for an efficient and effective language testing program"

In the late 1980s Stephen Krashen spent a six-month sabbatical at the Second Language Institute.

As a result of his previous research on L2 acquisition and our discussions with him, we developed the concept of sheltered courses - courses in which students take a subject in their L2 and are supported in this endeavour by an accompanying language course. After an initial period of success, these courses decreased in popularity and were virtually abandoned for almost 10 years.

This all changed with the University of Ottawa's *Vision 2010* project which made the promotion of bilingualism a top priority.

In support of this initiative, the university has created a new program in French Immersion Studies and is in the process of creating a new academic unit, the Institute for Official Languages and Bilingualism (ILOB), that will bring together all parties

Designing a computerized protocol: The Speaking Test

To develop the protocol, two teams were created, one for English and one for French, who worked together to design the speaking and writing tests while developing subtests specific to their language.

A number of the subtests were translated/ adapted from one language to another.

After a number of meetings, the teams developed a speaking test that would use multiple stimuli to elicit a speech sample and a new paragraph task for writing.

Technology

The university has numerous language labs

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

Robert Courchêne and Carla Hall speaking at the conference

"The challenge was to elicit this sample without the benefit of having a live interview"

(Continued from page 40)

that include individual computer stations, each with recording capacity. In every lab, there is a teacher console that can control the functions at each of the student stations.

For the initial field-testing session, a PowerPoint slide show of all instructions was developed.

The slide show was projected on each of the individual screens, with the administrator monitoring and controlling the slide sequencing and the timing of the recordings.

Eliciting the Speech Sample

The goal of the speaking test was to obtain a rich, 6 – 8 minute sample of academic language.

The challenge was to elicit this sample without the benefit of having a live interview in which the interviewer can prompt the candidate.

In a computerized test, the content needs to be provided in a clear and precise manner such that neither the technology nor the format prevents the candidate from producing the best sample possible.

In addition, the tasks the candidates complete must tap academic linguistic skills such as synthesizing and summarizing information, making recommendations and expressing hypothetical situations.

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

To meet this challenge, topics were chosen based on both their accessibility to the target audience and their potential for producing academic language.

To this end, we developed about ten possible topics, selecting for field testing the topic of "the zero tolerance policy used in schools to curb violence", believing that this theme would lend itself to a number of possible points of view.

Under normal testing conditions, candidates will be given a choice of three randomly-selected topics from a bank of topics.

In order to simulate completely automated computerized testing conditions, all of the instructions and stimuli were presented to the candidates on their computer screens without any input from the administrator.

To begin, candidates familiarized themselves with the technology by conducting a recording test.

Next, they were presented with an overview of what would be required of them to complete the speaking test.

For the warm-up part of the test, students were presented with three topics; they had to choose one and prepare a response (e.g., Why did you choose the University of Ottawa?).

For the main part of the test, the candidates were presented with a fact sheet on 'Violence in the Schools' and provided with paper to take notes.

They were then presented with two short recordings of two speakers expressing opposing views on the topic. Again, they were able to take notes.

They were then prompted to record an oral summary of what they had read and listened to.

Subsequent to this, they were given two series of related questions for which they had to select one from each series and prepare a personal response.

For all of the tasks listed above, candidates were given a specified time to select a topic, prepare a response and record their answers (2 minutes is allotted for the re-

	Raters 1+2	Rater 1 + Rater 2	
#	Face-to-Face	Computerized	
1	S2	S2	S2
2	S3	S4	S3
3	S3	S2	S1
4	S1	S2	S1
5	S4	S4	S4
6	S3	S2	S1
7	S1	S2	S2
8	S2	S2	S2
9	S3	S1	S1
10	S1	S2	S1
11	S2	S1	S1
12	S2	S1	S1
13	S3	S3	S4
14	S2	S 2	S3
15	S2	S2	S2
16	S2	S2	S3

Table 1: Field testing: Interviews

The rating grid used was from the Second Language Certification Test, which only discriminates at the higher levels. Candidates are assessed on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being a moderate speaker and everything below, and 4 being a native-like speaker. For the face-to-face interview raters independently assess the candidate and then negotiate and report just one final score.

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

(Continued from page 42)

cording of candidate's answers).

Based on the feedback from the students, minor changes were made to the format of the test and an automated computerized version was produced using *Ficelle*, a software program developed to computerize the SLI's tests.

After a number of trials of the original version, a final version was produced that will be used for large-scale testing in the 2006 winter semester.

Field Testing

Twenty-six Allophones, Anglophones and Francophones completed both a traditional face-to-face interview and the computerized speaking test in their second language.

The topic in the face-to-face interview was different from the computerized test, but candidates completed the same tasks of note-taking, summarizing, and answering questions in both formats.

All the speech samples were independently assessed by two trained raters using the same established rating grid.

A comparison analysis of the results showed that most candidates were evaluated to be at the same level on both tasks.

Weaker candidates performed slightly better in face-to-face interviews, but these differences were statistically insignificant (See Table 1)

Questionnaire

Candidates also completed a questionnaire on the computerized test experience and format, and the feedback was almost all positive.

Most candidates indicated that they believed that their performance on the computerized test was as good as that in the face-to-face interview, the exception being

#	Paragraph	Essay
1	4.5	4.5+
2	3.5	3.5
3	5+	5+
4	3.5	4.0
5	5+	5+
6	4.5	4.5+
7		4.5+
8	4.5	5.0
9	4.5	4.0
10	4.0	4.0

Table 2: Writing Test, Group 1

#	Paragraph	Essay
1	4.5	4.5
2	5.0	5.0
3	4.0-	3.5
4	3.5	3.5 (+)
5	3.5	3.5 (-)
6	3.5+	4.5
7	4.5	4.0+
8		4.0-
9	4.0-	4.0-
10	4.0	3.5
11	3.5+	3.5(-)
12	4.5	5.0
13	4.0-	4.5+
14	3.5-	3.5+

Table 3: Writing Test, Group 2

"The goal of the writing test was to obtain a rich sample of academic language from a large number of students in as short a period of time as possible"

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

(Continued from page 41)

To meet this challenge, topics were chosen based on both their accessibility to the target audience and their potential for producing academic language.

To this end, we developed about ten possible topics, selecting for field testing the topic of "the zero tolerance policy used in schools to curb violence", believing that this theme would lend itself to a number of possible points of view.

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3	S3	S2	S1
4	S1	S2	S1
5	S4	S4	S4
6	S3	S2	S1
7	S1	S2	S2
8	S2	S2	S2
9	S3	S1	S1
10	S1	S2	S1
11	S2	S1	S1
12	S2	S1	S1
13	S3	S3	S4
14	S2	S 2	S3
15	S2	S2	S2
16	S2	S2	S3

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Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

(Continued from page 42)

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8		4.0-
9	4.0-	4.0-
10	4.0	3.5
11	3.5+	3.5(-)
12	4.5	5.0
13	4.0-	4.5+
14	3.5-	3.5+

Table 3: Writing Test, Group 2

"The goal of the writing test was to obtain a rich sample of academic language from a large number of students in as short a period of time as possible"

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

(Continued from page 43)

the weaker candidates, who in general believed they performed more strongly in the face-to-face interview. There seems to be a threshold below which students feel more comfortable in the live interview (in general, candidates with S2 on the oral interview).

The Writing Test

The goal of the writing test was to obtain a rich sample of academic language from a large number of students in as short a period of time as possible. The two second language writing tests currently used at the University of Ottawa are the *CanTEST*, an essay format task, and the *Second Language Certification Test (SLCT)*, a report-style task.

For the immersion test, a new writing format was used (See examples of the two task types that were used for field testing).

Candidates were provided with a 300-word essay which included an introduction with two points outlined in the thesis statement. They were also given the first body paragraph, the topic sentence of the second paragraph, and a conclusion.

The task was to write the missing paragraph. Candidates were given 25 minutes for the task: 5 minutes to read the paragraph and 20 minutes to write a response. No minimum word count was required.

Field Testing

Two groups of students (Group 1: 10 students, Group 2: 14 students; see Tables 2 and 3) enrolled in an advanced ESL writing course completed the paragraph task and a traditional essay task, with a 300-word requirement and a 40-minute time limit.

All the writing samples were assessed independently by two trained raters using an established rating grid (*CanTEST*). All writing tasks were completed with paper and pencil.

On the *CanTEST Writing Assessment Grid*,

3.5 is a moderate writer; 4.5 is the level required for university entrance.

Score correlations. Not surprisingly, the correlation between the final scores obtained on the Paragraph Task and the Es-

score	Paragraph		Essay Task	
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 1	Rater 2
3.0	0	0	1	2
3.5	0	4	9	6
4.0	2	5	3	4
4.5	10	6	4	5
5.0	5	3	0	1

Table 4: Score Distribution by Task & Rater
Number of papers receiving given scores for Group 2

	Average # of words	Average # of minutes	Average # words per minute
Para-graph Task	132	20	6.6
Essay Task	301	34	8.9

Table 5: Task Efficiency for Group 2

> *"As would be expected, the paragraph task is the less efficient task, in that it presents a far heavier reading burden on the candidates"*

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

say Task was not very high: r =.39. This low correlation suggests that the two tasks are not tapping the same set of abilities.

Interrater reliability. As might be expected from the above discussion of scores and score distributions, there was somewhat better agreement between the two raters for the Essay Task than for the Paragraph Task.

The interrater reliability was .50 for the Paragraph Task, and .61 for the Essay Task. It should be noted that the rating grid used in this study was designed for use with essay tasks, and therefore would not be expected to be as well-suited to a paragraph task.

The scores and the range of scores were similar for both tasks in the first study group. For the second group, however, the traditional essay task produced generally lower scores and a wider range of scores than the paragraph task (See Table 4).

Efficiency of the two tasks. For the purpose of this report, efficiency is defined as the volume of writing produced in the allotted time.

Other things being equal, a longer writing sample is better than a shorter one.

Specifically, research has repeatedly demonstrated that longer writing samples are more reliably rated than shorter samples; thus, the number of words a candidate can generate in the given time is an important consideration. Table 5 summarizes the findings in this area.

As would be expected, the paragraph task is the less efficient task, in that it presents a far heavier reading burden on the candidates, and requires them to integrate their own thoughts with the existing composition.

Conclusion and Implications for Further Test Development

Given that admission to and progression through the Immersion Program are not high-stakes decisions, the primary demands on the associated testing program are that it be efficient, easy to administer, and easy to score.

This will be increasingly important if the enrollments in the program rise, as is anticipated.

The initiative being undertaken at present to make these tests computer-administered certainly helps serve the need for efficient testing.

Other measures to cut administrative demands could include having the papers scored by only one rater and having the computer program look at measures related to writing quality such as sentence length, vocabulary sophistication, and sentence structure.

It could also be argued that neither the Essay Task nor the Paragraph Task examined here is the most appropriate prompt.

Forty minutes is a great deal of time to devote to one component of a comparatively low-stakes test; it is possible that a prompt could be developed that would take only thirty minutes.

Such a prompt would have to be on a very accessible topic and would involve little reading.

In 2006, a large-scale study of the computerized version of both tests will be conducted using students enrolled in the immersion programs at the University of Ottawa.

Robert Courchêne *is a teacher trainer attached to the Second Language Institute at the University of Ottawa. His research interests include testing, curriculum design and multicultural/antiracism education.*

Carla Hall *is an ESL teacher with the Second Language Institute at the University of Ottawa. She has been involved in the development of various language tests and curriculum development projects at the University.*

> *"Forty minutes is a great deal of time to devote to one component of a comparatively low-stakes test"*

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

Sample Screens for the Computerized Test

❶

ORAL TEST
Part One

- You will have 30 seconds to read three questions
- Choose **ONE** question to answer
- You will have 45 seconds to *prepare* your response. You may make notes.
- You will have 2 minutes to say your response.
- The questions will remain on the screen while you prepare and answer the question you have chosen.

The same format was used for all parts of the computerized test with different types of stimuli used for cueing the students' responses: readings, recorded listening passages

❷ Choose **ONE** question to respond to. You have 30 seconds to choose.

1. Why did you choose the University of Ottawa and your field of study?

2. How did you learn your second language? What helped you most in learning it?

3. Should university education in Canada be free for all students who qualify? Why or why not?

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

③ You have 45 seconds to prepare your response.

1. Why did you choose the University of Ottawa and your field of study?

2. How did you learn your second language? What helped you most in learning it?

3. Should University education in Canada be free for all students who qualify? Why or why not?

④ You have 2 minutes to complete your response. Begin your response now.

1. Why did you choose the University of Ottawa and your field of study?

2. How did you learn your second language? What helped you most in learning it?

3. Should University education in Canada be free for all students who qualify? Why or why not?

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

Sample Writing Tasks

Task 1: Paragraph Task

Instructions: The text below, written for publication in a popular magazine, is missing most of its third paragraph. Write this paragraph using the information found in the rest of the text.

Sample writing tasks

Integrating Special Needs Children into the classroom

For many educators the logistics of integrating special needs children into the mainstream or regular classroom represents an important obstacle to the success of such programs. The situation is further complicated by the fact that no solid research has clearly demonstrated that either of the approaches - integration or education in segregated classrooms - has produced superior results. Yet, for many parents and teachers integration is the only acceptable way.

Integration provides an environment that allows all children to reach their potential. Children learn from each other and special education students, especially benefit when they can learn from their peers. Children, in general, rise to the level of expectation placed on them and their behaviour is often better when special education students are included rather than isolated in a resource room where a collection of poor behaviours tends to be present. Such classrooms provide all children with an enhanced sense of self worth; children see each other as being valuable and valued thereby reducing the possibility that children with disabilities will be victimized. However, not everyone agrees with this approach, claiming that it always requires an additional investment in human and physical resources and that the time spent on children with special needs is time lost to "normal" children.

The second approach, segregated classrooms, in which children are educated for most of the day apart from their classmates, provides children with the specialized training and setting they need to make progress. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

All things considered - additional human and physical costs, the need for trained teachers and additional personnel, logistics – I am convinced that integration is still the best program for children with special needs. Being different already results in their being isolated and a possible target for some form of discrimination. Integrating them with their peers provides them with a sense of belonging, a feeling that their difference is not an impediment to their being welcomed and accepted by their classmate. Yes, integration comes with a price, but a price well worth the investment.

Computerized Speaking and Writing Test (cont'd)

Sample Writing Tasks

Task 2: Average yearly income for occupations/professions

Instructions: In the chart below are found the average yearly salaries for a number of professions and occupations in Canada.

According to certain economists, salaries should be determined by market value - what the market believes your services are worth. That being the case, do you agree with the annual salaries being paid to the members of different professions and occupations found in the table below?

Provide reasons and examples to support your opinion.

You have 40 minutes to complete this task.

Professions/Occupations	Average yearly income ($)
Commercial and wholesale butchers/meat cutters	26,500
Painters, sculptors and other audio-visual artists	27,500
Family and marriage counsellors	36, 500
Electricians	42,500
Commercial and wholesale buyers	43,500
Orchestra conductors, composers and arrangers	47,200
Teachers	61,500
Managers : Human resources	61,800
Police (except for senior officers)	63, 500
Audiologists and Speech pathologists	67,900
Chiropractors	81,400
Lawyers	93,500
Dentists	150,100
Doctors	187,000
National Hockey League players	1,790,000

Sample writing tasks

SPECIAL REPORT: 2004 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Would you please repeat that?
Teachers evaluating student pronunciation

Presenters: Lorena Jessop, Queen's University, Kingston, and Stephanie Cross, University of California, Davis.

This conference session, which we were unable to publish earlier, was presented as a research report at the 2004 TESLOntario conference. We are pleased to present it in this issue of Contact.

Occasionally, even trained ESL instructors, accustomed to deciphering English spoken by non-native speakers, have difficulty giving specific advice to students about their pronunciation errors and teaching them how to improve their intelligibility.

Composition teachers, on the other hand, have for many years worked with clear objectives and standardized rubrics for their writing programs.

Similar tools, however, have not yet been developed for pronunciation and oral skills teachers. Capitol Area Pronunciation Specialists (CAPS)[1], an organization of ESL instructors in the Sacramento, California area felt that a pronunciation rubric that focused on intelligibility would be a useful tool.

Research revealed that Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996) had modified a 6-level index developed by Morley (1994) containing very broad de-

"Composition teachers…have for many years worked with clear objectives and standardized rubrics"

LEVEL	DESCRIPTORS
5	Speech is completely intelligible. Accent variances rarely distract the listener and do not impede communication.
4	Speech is mostly intelligible. Although accent variations are clearly present and may be distracting at times, they usually do not prevent understanding.
3	Speech is sometimes intelligible, but listener's effort and request for repetition or clarification may be necessary in order to understand the message. Speech is characterized by inconsistency.
2	Speech is often unintelligible, which requires the listener to frequently request repetition or clarification.
1	Speech is unintelligible. Even a trained listener has extreme difficulty understanding the speaker, recognizing only occasional words. Communication is impeded by severe or accumulated errors in any area.

1. http://www.scoe.otan.dni.us/webfarm/caps/index.html

2. This paper contains partial transcripts of samples generally written in Standard English orthography. However, where students have non-standard pronunciation, the text reflects a spelling-based phonetic reading in square brackets with likely targets in parenthesis. Question marks indicate uncertainty of the intended meaning. Pauses are symbolized by ellipses (…) with additional ellipses added to indicate additional length. Focus on correct/ incorrect stress is indicated by the stressed syllable being capitalised (e.g., interPRET instead of inTERpret). Arrows up (↑) represent rising intonation, and arrows down (↓) indicate falling intonation. Curly brackets are used to insert additional comments about pronunciation.

3. The Level Descriptors come with minor modifications from *Pronunciation Pedagogy and Theory* as reported in *Teaching Pronunciation*. However, the detailed descriptors in the rubric were suggested by CAPS members and further developed by Cross, Jessop, and Prado.

Would you please repeat that? (continued)

(Continued from page 50)

scriptive terms.

In an effort to develop a comprehensive and practical speech assessment rubric, therefore, CAPS developed the five general-level Descriptors below as a first step.

A more detailed rubric appears later in this paper.

Using Student Videotapes to Determine Levels

One of the best ways to analyze student speech is to start with authentic samples.

To illustrate the five general Level Descriptors above, we used videotaped presentations from courses that teach presentation skills and pronunciation.

Of course, having an audience view the videotapes or listen to actual audiotapes would have been the ideal situation for analyzing pronunciation and intelligibility; nevertheless, we have tried to recapture the essence of the presentations.

There is also a detailed explanation of our speech sample orthography.[2]

•**Student 1** discusses the economics of income distribution.

Her presentation is ranked as Level 3 because, while much of her speech can be understood, listeners need to listen carefully, and even after listening many times, some words are unintelligible.

For example, she says:

> Mmm today I want to ah introduce a very popular um concept and index to [mether] (measure) um ah degree of income in distribution, the the [ekality] (equality) degree of income distribution in the country. Now first let's look, let's

> look at this [tebo] (table) uh ... ... [tebo] (Table) uh 15.2. The title of this [tebo] (table) is distribution of money income of U.S. families by? [contails]? from 1947 to 1997.

In the above speech sample, some pronunciation errors (e.g., [mether] (measure)) occur, as well as repetition (e.g., let's look, let's look) and hesitations (e.g., ah).

With the focus only on pronunciation errors, Student 1 is rated as a high Level 3.

However, the repetitions and hesitations also affect her intelligibility, lowering her overall rating to a low Level 3.

For example, when she says, "a very popular uh concept," the hesitation between the adjective and noun results in an unnatural interruption in the thought group (logical groupings of language based on grammatical functions or semantics, often separated by a pause).

While a few hesitations are not distracting, too many makes the listener work harder to understand, and this greatly affects intelligibility.

This student was insufficiently prepared for her presentation; focusing more on preparation and presentation skills would probably improve her intelligibility.

• **Student 2's** presentation is more intelligible.

However, listeners must listen more carefully in order to understand, so he is also ranked as a low Level 3 but for different reasons:

> I wanna ... introduce the [proshedure] (procedure) of archaeological excavation. Ah as you know, anthropology is the disCIpline to study [shuman] (human) culture and has four sub-

"While a few hesitations are not distracting, too many makes the listener work harder to understand, and this greatly affects intelligibility"

Would you please repeat that? (continued)

(Continued from page 51)

> disCIplines: sociocultural↑, [lingistic] (linguistic)↑, and biological anthropology↑and archeoloGIST.↓

This student is starting to use natural intonation patterns (in his list of subdisciplines) and linking (wanna).

He seems more intelligible than Student 1 because of his presentation skills (e.g., effective visuals and good organization).

For example, compare the number of hesitations (Student 1: 7 in 65 words vs. Student 2: 1 in 31 words) and repetitions (Student 1: 2 in 65 words vs. Student 2: 0 in 31 words).

While Student 1's pronunciation level is higher than Student 2's, when one focuses on the rubric's definition of intelligibility, the students' levels are very similar.

• **Student 3** has good presentation skills, but many severe pronunciation errors and hesitations make him unintelligible (Level 1).

For example:

> With the read and uh write uh mm uh write uhhh [dis] (disk) ... the ah [dis] (disk) rotate at ah.. very [hiya] (high) [speeda] (speed)↑. Ah [this] (?it is?) [oval] (over) a hundred and twenty uh [cyko] (cycles) per second↓. And in the sssame times↑... the hhhead... this is the head... hhhead is uhhhh ?swinging? on the disk to read ah and ah [reada o stud date] (read or store data). In [facta] (fact)↑+↓, the [hhhead] (head), the head [is not compacta] (? is not in contact?) with disk directly↓.

Student 3 has unintelligible words (e.g., swinging), dropped syllables (e.g., [date] instead of data), added syllables (e.g., [reada] instead of read), and numerous hesitations (11 in 75 words), all of which make understanding this student extremely difficult.

On the other hand, he sometimes pauses appropriately between phrases and often has correct intonation (e.g., And in the sssame times↑... the hhhead...).

• **Student 4's** presentation is ranked as a Level 4 because although it is evident that he is a non-native speaker of English, he can be easily understood. For example, he says:

> Yesterday,↓ ah I went to ah San Francisco from Davis↓ ah ah I drove to San Francisco↓ but the [fac-tiz] (fact is) I was late,↓ very late.↓ That was a very important appointment.↓ I I [shud] (should). I [shud] (should) have been there on time↓ but I was late↓ that was that was very serious then I have to explain,↓ why I was late.↓ That's the fact.↓ That's the fact that I'm gonna explain,↓ I'm gonna analyse.↓

Very few pronunciation problems can be found in this excerpt.

Some of this student's strengths are his ability to mark thought groups using correct intonation (appropriate drops at the end of phrases such as "I was late,↓ very late.↓"), linking (e.g., [fac-tiz] (fact is)), word stress, and generally appropriate consonants and vowels.

Student 4's hesitations (4 in 73) usually occur correctly between phrases; consequently, they do not decrease intelligibility.

However, because the organization of his presentation is quite weak, some listeners in his class struggled to fully understand what he was trying to communicate.

Interestingly, while the above students represent several pronunciation levels, it is clear that students can compensate to some degree with a variety of strategies, including being well-organized and using effective visual aids.

As teachers, we can teach our students

"It is clear that students can compensate to some degree with a variety of strategies, including being well-organized"

Would you please repeat that? (continued)

to improve their ability to communicate on two fronts: pronunciation and compensatory strategies.

Understanding the Detailed CAPS Pronunciation Proficiency Rubric

While the Level Descriptors provide a broad overview of a student's pronunciation, they lack the specificity needed when teachers give more detailed feedback.

After CAPS developed the general Level Descriptors, the authors expanded and developed it into the rubric below.

Besides being divided into rows by the original five levels, the rubric is divided by columns into *suprasegmentals* and *segmentals*. (See table on page 48).

Suprasegmentals are divided into the subsections of *intonation, rhythm* and *word stress*.

Segmentals are subdivided into *vowel* and *consonant* subsections. Finally, within each subsection, categories (preceded by a •) describe a variety of specific pronunciation skills.

As we saw in the speech samples analyzed with the broader Level Descriptors, students generally belong in one overall category.

However, they may not fall into a specific level perfectly, but may in fact fit into a higher or lower level in specific categories.

Severe problems in any one area is often sufficient to move a student into a lower level because they may seriously distort intelligibility.

Using Student Audiotapes to Illustrate Rubric Categories

In order to better apply the rubric, the authors selected audiotapes that focus on specific salient features and that represent a wide variety of language groups and levels of proficiency.

The Suprasegmentals

• **Student A** is a Vietnamese student (Level 1) with severe problems in more than one area exemplifying the extreme difficulty of understanding a speaker whose speech is mostly "flat" and does not differentiate between content words (nouns, verbs, and adjectives, etc.) and function words (articles, pronouns, conjunctions, etc.).

In addition, Student A does not use correct thought groups, and although most of her words have the correct number of syllables (Level 3), her level is lowered because she stresses all syllables equally except in high-frequency expressions (Level 2).

This student did learn to use falling intonation at the end of her sentences, indicating that she is emerging as a Level 3 in this category.

However, when Student A has additional pronunciation errors such as stressing the wrong syllable in a word, using the incorrect sound (e.g., "bus" instead of "but") or dropping a consonant (e.g., "cars" instead of "cards"), she is impossible to understand.

Therefore, our overall impression is that Student A's phrases and sentences are unintelligible (Level 1), and only after repeatedly replaying the tape, were the

"...[there is] extreme difficulty understanding a speaker whose speech is mostly "flat" and does not differentiate between content words...and function words"

Would you please repeat that? (continued)

CAPS descriptors

Level descriptors	SUPRASEGMENTALS			SEGMENTALS	
	Intonation	Rhythm	Word Stress	Vowels	Consonants
Level 5: Speech is completely intelligible. Accent variances rarely distract the listener and do not impede communication.	•natural English intonation patterns	•content words emphasized & function words de-emphasized •grammatical thought groups •linking usually appropriate	•correct number of syllables •correct word stress	•makes a clear distinction between tense & lax vowels •vowels lengthened appropriately •vowels reduced appropriately	•natural final consonants •fully intelligible consonant clusters
Level 4: Speech is mostly intelligible. Although accent variations are clearly present and may be distracting at times, they usually do not prevent understanding.	•control of English intonation with occasional lapses	•content & function words usually stressed appropriately •thought groups usually grammatical •linking sometimes appropriate	•correct number of syllables with occasional lapses •correct word stress with occasional lapses	•moderate control of tense/lax vowel quality •stressed syllables often lengthened •vowels often reduced appropriately in high frequency expressions	•rarely drops final consonants •mostly intelligible consonant clusters
Level 3: Speech is sometimes intelligible, but listener's effort and request for repetition/ clarification may be necessary to understand the message. Speech characterised by inconsistency.	•emerging control of English intonation patterns	•content /function words sometimes stressed inappropriately •some grammatical thought groups •occasional linking, especially high frequency words	•some control over number of syllables •occasional mistakes in word stress	•some control of tense/lax vowel quality •emerging control of lengthened stressed syllables •vowels are sometimes reduced appropriately	•final consonants sometimes pronounced appropriately •emerging control of consonant clusters
Level 2: Speech is often unintelligible, which requires the listener to frequently request repetition or clarification.	•foreign-sounding intonation except in high-frequency expressions	•content and function words often stressed inappropriately •occasional grammatical thought groups •linking only in high frequency expressions	•frequent errors in number of syllables •frequent errors in word stress (some retention of L1 patterns)	•occasional control of tense/lax vowel quality •stressed syllables are sometimes lengthened •vowels are occasionally reduced	•final consonants often dropped •consonant clusters problematic
Level 1: Speech is unintelligible. Even a trained listener has extreme difficulty understanding the speaker, recognizing only occasional words. Communication is impeded by severe or accumulated errors in any area.	•very foreign-sounding intonation patterns	•content and function words stressed equally •ungrammatical thought groups •no linking of words	•persistent errors in number of syllables •persistent errors in word stress (significant retention of L1 patterns)	•tense/lax vowel quality the same as L1's •failure to lengthen stressed syllables •no reduced vowels	•persistent errors pronouncing final consonants •L1 phonology dominates consonant clusters

CAPS: pronunciation proficiency descriptors [3]

SPECIAL REPORT: 2004 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Would you please repeat that? (continued)

CAPS descriptors

Level descriptors	SUPRASEGMENTALS			SEGMENTALS	
	Intonation	**Rhythm**	**Word Stress**	**Vowels**	**Consonants**
Level 5: Speech is completely intelligible. Accent variances rarely distract the listener and do not impede communication.	•natural English intonation patterns	•content words emphasized & function words de-emphasized. •grammatical thought groups •linking usually appropriate	•correct number of syllables •correct word stress	•makes a clear distinction between tense & lax vowels •vowels lengthened appropriately •vowels reduced appropriately	•natural final consonants •fully intelligible consonant clusters
Level 4: Speech is mostly intelligible. Although accent variations are clearly present and may be distracting at times, they usually do not prevent understanding.	•control of English intonation with occasional lapses	•content & function words usually stressed appropriately •thought groups usually grammatical •linking sometimes appropriate	•correct number of syllables with occasional lapses •correct word stress with occasional lapses	•moderate control of tense/lax vowel quality •stressed syllables often lengthened •vowels often reduced appropriately in high frequency expressions	•rarely drops final consonants •mostly intelligible consonant clusters
Level 3: Speech is sometimes intelligible, but listener's effort and request for repetition/ clarification may be necessary to understand the message. Speech characterised by inconsistency.	•emerging control of English intonation patterns	•content /function words sometimes stressed inappropriately •some grammatical thought groups •occasional linking, especially high frequency words	•some control over number of syllables •occasional mistakes in word stress	•some control of tense/lax vowel quality •emerging control of lengthened stressed syllables •vowels are sometimes reduced appropriately	•final consonants sometimes pronounced appropriately •emerging control of consonant clusters
Level 2: Speech is often unintelligible, which requires the listener to frequently request repetition or clarification.	•foreign-sounding intonation except in high-frequency expressions	•content and function words often stressed inappropriately •occasional grammatical thought groups •linking only in high frequency expressions	•frequent errors in number of syllables •frequent errors in word stress (some retention of L1 patterns)	•occasional control of tense/lax vowel quality •stressed syllables are sometimes lengthened •vowels are occasionally reduced	•final consonants often dropped •consonant clusters problematic
Level 1: Speech is unintelligible. Even a trained listener has extreme difficulty understanding the speaker, recognizing only occasional words. Communication is impeded by severe or accumulated errors in any area.	•very foreign-sounding intonation patterns	•content and function words stressed equally •ungrammatical thought groups •no linking of words	•persistent errors in number of syllables •persistent errors in word stress (significant retention of L1 patterns)	•tense/lax vowel quality the same as L1's •failure to lengthen stressed syllables •no reduced vowels	•persistent errors pronouncing final consonants •L1 phonology dominates consonant clusters

CAPS: pronunciation proficiency descriptors [3]

Would you please repeat that? (continued)

(Continued from page 53)

authors able to decipher what she was saying:

> Last Tuesday was Lunar New Year in my country, ↓ [Show] (So) I would like to talk to you about this traditional holiday. ↓ Before Lunar New Year the people was very busy.↓ They [wen] (went) shopping to buy new clothes [far] (for our) family,↓ some [fooz] (foods), candies, wine to offer their [relati] (relative) and their friends↓ Then we sended them the [cars] (cards) [wish] (with) the best wishes.↓ Also they cleaned up and deCORated their house with flower and [plan] (plants).↓

In order to improve overall intelligibility, Student A needed practice using correct stress within words as well as stressing content words within sentences.

The subsequent speech sample is a much-improved Student A, who has had extensive practice focusing on content and function words.

This time she is presenting the poem "The Purple Cow" (Burgess, 1996), which shows the benefits of using poetry to improve English rhythm (e.g., "I never hope [t'seewon] (to see one). But I [cn] (can) tell you anyhow ... ").

In addition to stressing content words, she is using linking, reductions and thought groups correctly.

While her intonation is still unnatural, she has become significantly more intelligible (Level 3).

•**Student B**, who is also Vietnamese, is mostly intelligible and has emerging control with occasional lapses in intonation (Level 4) such as when she uses rising intonation at the end of a statement instead of the falling intonation that would be appropriate.

The authors are not certain whether this student is making an error in intonation
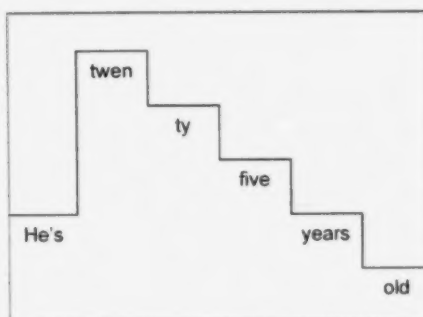
Example of the Jump Up, Step Down Intonation Pattern

or asking her instructor, by using rising intonation, whether or not she is correctly pronouncing the consonant blends in "extra" [ks] and "cost" [st] as she says, "... so I'll just hafta pay the extra cost"↑ (reading from Gilbert, 1993, p. xii).

Student B also shows emerging linking (Level 4) when she combines "have to" into "hafta."

•**Student C** is from Ukraine, and while mostly intelligible, has an exaggerated intonation drop at the end of statements; hence, she is judged to have emerging intonation (Level 3).

Although many Ukrainian students in our classes have similar but less-exaggerated intonation patterns, they lose volume at the end of each sentence, which Student C does not do.

However in the following sample, she does not use the required rising intonation pattern when she lists family members, and has minor word stress problems:

> I'm from Ukraine {sigh}.↓ I arrived in [Sacramenno] (Sacramento)↓ in November 14, 1998 {sigh}.↓ I arrived with my son,↓ my [fazer] (father) {sigh},↓ and [stepMOzer] (stepmother).↓ My son is Ruslan.↓ He's 25 years old {sigh}.↓ We live togezher (together).↓

"Although many Ukrainian students in our classes have similar but less-exaggerated intonation patterns, they lose volume at the end of each sentence"

Would you please repeat that? (continued)

(Continued from page 55)

Student C shows great potential for improving her intonation because, in addition to the end of sentence drop, she uses intonation, similar to Stern's "Jump Up, Step Down" pattern (1991) illustrated in Figure 1.

Student C also uses thought groups and is easily understood (combining Levels 3 and 4).

Unfortunately, Student C reveals that she is still "emerging" because the next sample shows weakness in thought groups (Level 2), which she combined with incorrect intonation.

These errors seriously reduce intelligibility despite reasonable pronunciation of individual sounds and few word stress errors (Level 4).

Student C's weaknesses may also be an indication of poor preparation, poor reading skills, or inability to advance beyond the communicative tasks required in familiar, everyday speech.

No doubt she has spoken about her family many times, as she did in the first sample, but the next sample is new territory for her:

> Fare[s] ... are cheaper if ... you stay over Saturday night ↓ ... ... But unfortunately I've already ↑ ... [arrang-ed] (arranged)...some business ... here ... that FriDAY,↑ so ↑+↓ I'll ... just hafta ... pay ... the exTRA↑ ... cost.↓ (student reading from Gilbert, 1993, p. xii)

Student C is a combination of many levels at different times and with different tasks. Because she does some things well and others poorly, she is considered "emerging" (Level 3) which, as the rubric says, is "characterized by inconsistency."

• **Student D** is Chinese and has been

practicing the same dialogue as Student C. Her speech is a solid Level 4.

Student D shows correct English intonation regarding question formation, listing, and checking for information, as well as falling intonation at the end of sentences.

> **A:** [Ca-nI] (Can I) help you?↑
>
> **B:** Yes, I want to fly to [Sick-cago] (Chicago) on Wednesday the seventh (pause) and return on Friday the ninth. ↓
>
> **A:** Of October?↑
>
> **B:** No, November.↓ How [mu-chiz] (much is) the fare?↓
>
> **A:** Fares are cheaper if you stay over [Saturday-a-nigh] (Saturday night).↓ (reading from Gilbert, 1993, p. xii)

Student D's thought groups and appropriate stress between content and function words are evident; linking is present in phrases like [Ca-nI] (Can I) and [mu-chiz] (much is).

Additionally, she uses correct syllable number and word stress except for an added syllable in [Saturday-a-nigh] (Saturday night) where she uncharacteristically drops a final consonant.

•**Student E** is a Spanish speaker with serious individual word stress problems, (e.g., interPRET, disAGrement), weak thought groups and foreign-sounding intonation (Level 2).

A bright note is that this student is beginning to self-correct when he changes syllable number from [uncessful] (3 syllables) to unsuccessful (4 syllables).

What saves Student E from being unintelligible is his overall ability to accurately pronounce individual sounds, which will be discussed in the following section.

"These errors seriously reduce intelligibility despite reasonable pronunciation of individual sounds..."

Would You Please Repeat That? (continued)

Stephanie Cross

Lorena Jessop

Segmentals

The following samples, compiled from the audiotapes of many students, focus on the production of segmentals, which include vowel length and quality, individual sounds, and clusters.

Vowel length and quality

These speech samples illustrate vowel length (longer vowel sounds before voiced consonants as in "bad" vs. "bat") and quality (including both place of articulation as in "heat" vs. "hat" and tenseness/laxness as in "heat" vs. "hit").

The samples contain phrases with tense/lax vowel errors as in [ease] (is), and [chipper] (cheaper), which are caused by using a tense vowel (produced with muscle tenseness in the mouth and often held for a slightly longer period of time as in "sleep") instead of a lax vowel (produced with relaxed muscles and held for a shorter length of time such as "slip") or vice-versa. The sample containing [slackers] (slickers) is an example of a vowel sound that is articulated at the wrong place in the mouth.

Dropped final consonants

A medley of the phrase "morning or afternoon," (Gilbert, 1993, p. xii) contains a variety of pronunciation errors. The students mispronounce the word "afternoon" as [afterNOO] with a dropped final consonant, [afterNUN] with the wrong vowel sound, and [AFternun] with incorrect word stress and vowel sound.

In contrast, the final sample contains excellent intonation, stress, and vowel sounds (Level 5).

Another group with dropped final syllables, such as [nigh] for "night," [me] for "meal", [dolla] for "dollar," and [hell] for "help," exemplifies speech problems, in Levels 1 through 3.

Consonant clusters

The next samples deal with consonant clusters, such as the [st] in "stop," which can be found in initial, medial, and final positions. In the phrase "have to pay the

"Vowel and consonant errors go far beyond simply producing the sound correctly..."

Would you please repeat that? (continued)

[estra coat] (extra cost)." "extra" lacks [kst] in a medial position, and the word "cost" lacks [st] in the final position. In addition, the word [thas] (that's) is missing the [t] of the [ts] cluster in the final position.

These Level 1 through 3 errors are challenging because often these consonant clusters do not occur in a student's first language.

For example, Japanese requires each consonant to have a corresponding vowel (CV) as can be seen in the word "Su-zu-ki." To compensate, these students often either drop a sound (e.g., [cos] instead of "cost") or add a sound (e.g., [speeda] instead of "speed").

Moreover, if an English consonant cluster exists in one position in the student's first language (e.g., the initial position of [st] in **st**op), it may not exist in the medial position (e.g., in**st**ant) or the final position (e.g., pa**st**), which may account for the student who produces a consonant cluster correctly in one word but not in another.

As we can see, vowel and consonant errors go far beyond simply producing the sound correctly.

Conclusion

The CAPS rubric is a useful framework for diagnosing pronunciation errors, providing feedback about students' pronunciation problems and acting as a tool to describe what makes students more intelligible.

The authors are evaluating the rubric in their classes, which will no doubt lead to further refinements.

The final words of this paper must go to thank Marie Larson who originally thought of developing a rubric, JoAnna Prado who contributed to the rubric and provided some speech samples and to Janet Lane for her excellent suggestions in many areas.

Of course, we must also thank the students who have generously donated their tapes for analysis, without which this rubric could not have been developed. ⊙

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Stephanie Cross is an M.A. Lecturer, Department of Linguistics, University of California, Davis.

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Seven tips on how to motivate your students to attend regularly

Presenter: Hosnie Abu-Abed

At one time or another, most instructors in adult education ESL classes have faced a class in which some students are perennially absent.

Granted there are a hundred and one reasons for absenteeism, and many of them are legitimate: shifting work schedules, a new baby at home, caregiving for a family member who is sick, illness, doctors' and dentists' appointments, economic crises, and so on. Nonetheless, there are sometimes students who could be attending class regularly but who don't.

Are there strategies a teacher can use in order to reach such students and challenge or motivate them to attend regularly?

Frankly, yes, there are! Here are some that I have found really helpful.

❶ Discuss and agree on what is acceptable and expected attendance right at the beginning of each term or semester. Be sure to do this together and encourage lots of student input. When your students have a part in drawing up 'the rules', they are more committed to them. Actually, the fewer 'rules' the better. And don't forget to write them down on a poster and display the poster prominently in the classroom. This reference will always be available and is in itself a good language teaching and learning resource.

❷ Use a variety of different teaching approaches or strategies that suit your students' learning styles, even in a single day. Make a checklist of teaching strategies for your-

Engagement in the process helps ensure attendance in the classroom

self, and add new ones to the list, for example:

- Computer-assisted learning activities
- Direct teaching under your guidance and control
- Class discussions
- Group and Pair assignments
- Role-playing activities
- Brainstorming

As the term progresses, it's a good idea to focus on the teaching/learning strategies that students are most receptive to and that they seem to enjoy most.

And always observe your students carefully so that you can adjust strategies that that are not productive or suitable for this particular group or that particular student.

❸ Be well prepared every single day. This means preparing and/or finding learning materials that are appealing, timely, attractive, clear,

"When your students have a part in drawing up the rules, they are more committed to them"

SPECIAL REPORT: 2005 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Seven tips (continued)

(Continued from page 59)

and in which students can see the benefits for themselves. Don't forget that their language needs will change, and you must adapt your approaches and materials to meet their changing needs and capabilities.

④ Challenge your students by collecting interesting materials and *realia* which stretch their language knowledge and skills. Try to stay one step ahead of their level. And remember that textbooks are only one way to present information. But if you are using a textbook, try to modify the exercises for each particular skill that you want them to practise.

The rest of the world is rich in learning resources that you can use or adapt for students at many different levels of fluency. And don't forget to ask your colleagues for help in building up your store of practical learning resources.

⑤ Teach new lessons every day, especially on Friday. Teaching the same topic for more than one day is acceptable and often necessary, but vary the way you structure the lesson, or change the resource material, or enlist the aid of a student to help you teach part of the lesson. Keep them involved and filled with participation and expectation.

When you plan your Friday lessons, be sure to teach something new. Students will then build up an expectation that Friday is always an important day to be in class. And don't give handouts on Friday if the attendance has been spotty at the end of the week. Write the important learning points on the board.

⑥ Be strict with your students – and yourself - about punctuality. Start every class at the appointed time, every time. Build a system of rewards for early comers. For example, devise exciting and interesting 'Early Bird Activities', but restrict their use to those who are on time for class. Some teachers even have a ten-cent late arrival penalty; the money that you collect can be used to finance a class breakfast, for example.

Whatever strategy you decide to use, you need to be the role model and whatever penalty a student would have to face for lateness should be applied to you, too. This adds to the fun and makes the point that the rules apply to everyone.

⑦ Respect and appreciate your students as individuals, and try to help them with their problems. Be active in your role as their teacher, mentor, and advisor. You might be the only person they can turn to for information and advice, and many students may rely heavily on their teachers to help them understand and endure the new experiences they are facing in their new homeland.

Finally, students will attend class regularly if they feel seriously about school and they will only take it seriously if you do. That is the challenge that all teachers need to set both for their students and themselves. Keep working at it consistently, and you will find that most problems of poor attendance will end.

Hosnie Abu-Abed is currently a LINC teacher at the Palestine House. She taught EFL for many years before becoming an ESL teacher, and she has experience in all LINC levels.

> *"Students will attend class regularly if they feel seriously about school "*

Puppets 'n' prose

Presented by Connie Smith and Franki Robinson

Brain teaser: puppetry involves both left and right brain functions

> *"The puppet helps to release anxiety and inhibitions about speaking in the new language"*

Puppets **speak** a unique global language that helps to unite and teach people from around the world. It's a language of feelings, ideals and passions. In the ESL classroom, puppets can also work a special magic, not only to stimulate language but also to unlock thought and emotions.

Most people think that puppets are only for little children, but we have not found that to be true. For proof, we offer the evidence of the dozens of fully-engaged teachers who come to our workshops.

They come into our sessions as strangers and leave as fast friends, eager to get started on puppetry in their own classrooms. We are also convinced that adult ESL learners can get as much out of puppetry as the children we normally work with.

The magic of puppets seems to be that they help the shy ESL student - of whatever age - to escape into another personality; in effect, they try it on.

If the student makes a mistake in grammar or pronunciation, it's the puppet character that made the mistake, and not they. In this way the puppet helps to release anxiety and inhibi-

Puppets 'n' prose (continued)

Connie Smith demonstrates how to work a large, friendly, fire-breathing hand puppet.

(Continued from page 61)

tions about speaking in the new language.

Puppets seem also to free language that lies hidden beneath the surface and bring it out into the open where it can breathe and live.

ESL teachers who begin to use puppets will begin to notice an interesting phenomenon: students who are not at all silly in serious classroom activities will act silly if their puppet character seems to demand it.

The puppet seems to provide a way to access a hidden and dramatic part of their personality.

In addition, it allows, even encourages, them to experiment with language - trying on voices, playing with sounds, attempting to use new vocabulary. In doing this, they are learning pronunciation, intonation, stress, linking of sounds, reductions – in fact, all the things that we work so hard to teach in more conventional ways.

Puppets, in a sense, transform the puppeteer.

> *"Puppetry...invokes both left-brain and right-brain thinking, and helps to reach all different types of students"*

There are many different kinds of puppets, and teachers should try to give students experience with a wide variety: marionettes, hand puppets, stick puppets, sock puppets, rod puppets, shadow puppets, and so on.

The choice of puppet often indicates how comfortable the ESL student is going to be when it comes to performance.

A student who has confidence will often choose a marionette puppet, even though he or she will be visible to the audience.

They seem to understand intuitively that the audience will focus on the puppet and not on them, especially if the puppet they have made is interesting and attractive.

On the other hand, shy students will often choose a type of puppet that they can manipulate from behind a curtain, because in performance the student will not be seen by the audience.

Perhaps that is why, at the beginning, these reticent students often choose to do puppet plays in which the story is told by a classmate who takes on the role of narrator.

The division of tasks gives to each one an important function in the presentation: the narrator must tell the story clearly, dramatically and convincingly, but the unseen puppeteer must listen carefully to enact the actions correctly, thereby demonstrating listening comprehension. Both grow in their language, but in different modalities.

Puppets are successful in the classroom because they provide students

Puppets 'n' prose (continued)

with multi-dimensional and multi-sensory activity.

At every step in the process of making and using puppets, of course, learners have to use language - imagining their puppet character, giving it a name and a personality, experimenting with materials to create it, and then performing a story.

Puppetry thus invokes both left-brain and right-brain thinking, and helps to reach all different types of students, an approach now commonly referred to as differentiated instruction.

Another important dimension of using puppets in the ESL classroom is that all cultures of the world have puppets, and invariably the experiences that children have had with puppets in their first language have been positive and self-affirming.

With older students, puppets are also a good way to encourage sharing of folktales and legends that reveal the literary culture of the home country.

Furthermore, this sharing provides an opportunity to value every culture in the classroom.

Important, too, is that fact that many story themes and their embedded values are common across cultures, and students from quite different home cultures delight in comparing their stories.

In effect, through puppetry the students themselves provide much of the content for ESl lessons, and in sharing their cultural heritage they become

---

What good are puppets? They...

- develop creativity
- prompt expressive speaking
- enhance oral expression
- stimulate spontaneous speech
- enhance voice production and enunciation
- provide oral reading opportunities
- spark writing
- engage learners in art
- provide multi-sensory experience
- help learners explore difficult topics
- validate other cultures and literatures
- teach sequencing
- develop self-confidence and pride
- enhance social and group work skills
- encourage problem-solving
- improve listening skills
- give pleasure and fun
- focus students' attention
- are easy to organize
- offer the chance to try out new personalities
- allow for both teacher or child-centred learning
- provide visual and kinaesthetic experience

"Puppets lend themselves to an incredibly wide range of uses"

Puppets 'n' prose (continued)

Conversation starter: making puppets is messy but fun.

"Puppetry can stimulate language across the universe of discourse"

'the experts', another validating experience.

Recently we developed puppet plays with classes of 10-year-olds, by using the folktale, The Three Billy Goats Gruff. Our Afghani students went home and asked their parents to tell them stories about goats.

The children brought back their parents' stories and used them to create their own puppet plays at school. Telling led to writing, which led to creating puppets, which led to rehearsing which led to performing.

And at every step along the way students were using the English language, whether it was giving instructions to a less verbal classmate, trying out expressions, learning new words, or following oral directions.

At the same time, teachers could observe and assess the students' growth as they learned. The experience was rich in all the ways that count. In short, puppets cause learning to happen.

We have never seen a child balk at doing puppetry. Perhaps it's because of the fact that they have made something – they have created another 'person' and given it life. Often they will talk to their puppet in English, but curiously almost never do they do this in their first language. This is a bit of a mystery that we are not yet able to ex-

Puppets 'n' prose (continued)

(Continued from page 64)

plain.

Puppetry doesn't rely solely on using literature for its content, however. Students can do puppet tales about a historical event, for example.

They can even invent puppet plays about grammar, using a noun puppet and a pronoun puppet. Some teachers have also done puppet plays about mathematical concepts with a 'ruler' puppet that meets a tape measure puppet.

Puppets lend themselves to an incredibly wide range of uses in developing language in the classroom.

Whether for adult classes or for children, puppetry can stimulate language across the universe of discourse, in the four principal modalities of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Puppets seem to unleash a creative urge in learners and by their success they validate the learning experiences which accompany that freedom. And, what is more, they are fun.

Connie Smith and *Franki Robinson* *are ESL Resource teachers with the Upper Grand District School Board. They also perform with puppet troupes and help to train teachers in the effective use of puppetry in classrooms.*

"Celebrate the Puppet"

A conference of the Puppeteers of America: Great Lakes Region

and the

Ontario Puppetry Association

Fanshawe College, London Ontario

July 27 - 30, 2006

www.puppetwerx.ca

FYI – For your interest:

Puppetry in Practice (PIP) is an arts-based literacy program that was created in 1980. Dr. Tova Ackerman is the executive director and founder of Puppetry in Practice.

As stated on the web site of The Center for Educational Change (CEC), (http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/cec/) Dr. Ackerman's work "demonstrated that the use of puppets is beneficial to those students learning English as a second language because puppets provide multi-sensory experiences through language skills, folklore, music, and storytelling.

Ackerman's experience shows that students more readily express ideas in visual ways before they make a linguistic statement." You can view photos of some of the puppets used in the program on the Brooklyn College website.

http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/mkframe/mkframe.htm?frontURL=http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu//bc/showcase/schooled/

Additional resource:

Puppets Elora website:
http://www.artscouncil.elora.on.ca/Puppets.htm

Resources

Collaborative writing and speaking activities: a sociocultural theory perspective on practice
by Jill Cummings and Huamei Han

Jill Cummings and Huamei Han

Sociocultural theory (SCT) based on Vygotskian views of learning provides a unique theoretical lens for planning language learning through social activity (Vygotsky, 1986; Lantolf, 2000).

An SCT perspective is useful in helping teachers to develop collaborative writing activities in the ESL classroom.

In this article we elaborate on some ideas for collaborative and community writing and speaking from a sociocultural perspective.

We are attempting here to connect sociocultural theory with practical applications in the ESL classroom.

In Part 1 we contrast sociocultural perspectives on learning with traditional or mainstream theories of learning in order to promote an understanding of an SCT framework, and to enhance the use of collaborative learning.

In Part 2 we describe several examples of classroom activities for collaborative and community writing, developed from an SCT perspective.

We have used these collaborative activities in our own teaching of second languages with both adults and children.

We encourage teachers to adapt them to their own ESL classrooms according to their learners' needs and interests.

The activities presented are but a few of the possibilities for such activities.

We hope that this sociocultural theory analysis is helpful to teachers as they develop their own collaborative learning activities.

Part 1: Sociocultural Theory and Traditional Theories of Learning

Sociocultural theories describe learning as a process that proceeds from social or interpersonal experiences amongst learners to intrapersonal learning.

Sociocultural theory perspective (continued)

Vygotskian Sociocultural Perspective	Piagetian Traditional Perspective
Learning proceeds from the **interpersonal** to the **intrapersonal** (from the social to the individual)	Learning is represented **by individual cognition**
Mediated activity	**Mechanism** of individual cognition
Language **completes** thinking	Language **conveys** thinking
Transformation of **knowledge**	**Transmission** of **knowledge**
Process-oriented	**Product**-oriented

Table 1

(Continued from page 66)

Therefore, collaborative activities – what we refer to as 'community learning activities' – deserve special consideration by teachers in that they play a significant role in facilitating the development of mind in intermental, or social, activity.

In other words, what happens first on the social or intermental plane in collaborative learning may develop or be internalized by learners on the individual or intramental plane.

A collaborative writing task, for example, has the potential to engage learners in developing both the processes of learning – e.g. collaborative dialogue and task-completion strategies – as well as the content and language of the task itself – e.g. learning how to plan and write a summary of a news article.

Setting up a collaborative writing task helps the teacher to facilitate this opportunity for intermental or shared activity, dialogue and thinking.

These are then taken on or appropriated as part of the individual's learning of language, of writing processes, of strategies and thinking.

Table 1 summarizes the principal differences between sociocultural perspectives on learning (represented by Vygotskian notions) and more traditional, mainstream approaches (represented by Piagetian ideas).

Sociocultural theory emphasizes that learning is co-constructed in dialogue - either collaborative dialogue and activity with others, or through self-talk and reflection.

Traditional views of learning, on the other hand, maintain that knowledge is contained within the individual and is conveyed by transmission from person to person.

This contrast has helped us to adopt a paradigm for knowledge construction that characterizes learning as a collaborative and social activity in contrast to the traditional model, sometimes characterized through the image of "pouring or transferring information into a vessel".

In the former approach, the teacher's work becomes one of facilitating, observing and tending to the development of intermental (social) and intrapersonal (individual) experience throughout the learning process, rather than focusing on the final product and the transfer of information to or between individuals.

Sociocultural theory perspective (continued)

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Sociocultural theory perspective (continued)

(Continued from page 67)

Part 2: Sociocultural Applications for Classroom Activities

The following outlines a set of collaborative learning activities that we have used effectively in our ESL classrooms.

We invite teachers to consider them for use in their own classrooms, too.

1. Collaborative summary writing

2. Triple entry for post-reading, writing and discussion

3. Project-based learning activities

4. Collaborative writing based on cartoons and pictures

5. Community activities

Collaborative Summary Writing

- In small groups students discuss and highlight the main points of a short newspaper article or another assigned text

- Students in small groups collaborate to write a summary of the article on chart paper

- They then pass their draft to another group for peer editing.

- A final draft is written on the opposite side or another sheet of chart paper.

- Final summaries are posted for oral reading, comments and questions, and final editing by the whole class and teacher.

The Triple Entry for Post-reading, Writing and Discussion

Students in pairs or small groups create a triple entry chart for an assigned reading – see chart 1.

Students generate questions based on the reading, and write these questions on the board for discussion (and testing and review, if required).

Title of Article:		
Main Points	**How this relates to me/us**	**Questions for Discussion**
Who?		
What?		
Where?		
When?		
How?		
Why?		

Chart 1: The Triple Entry for Post-reading, Writing and Discussion

Sociocultural theory perspective (continued)

Project-based Learning

- Students brainstorm topics related to a Theme – for example "Lifestyles in Canada". (My students have explored topics as marriage, recreation, immigration, going to university, religion, work, recreation and fitness).

- Students are assigned to develop questions for an interview with an English-speaking Canadian on their topic, either individually or in pairs.

- Students prepare a list of questions for the interview and confer with the teacher about the interview.

- Students go out to the community for the interview. (Our students have interviewed neighbors, other students at the university, their host family, librarians at the college, people they meet in fitness programs, and so on.) They tape record the interview using small hand-held tape recorders.

- Students share or present 3 of 4 main points from their interview with the class. They may play portions of their interview tape, and contrast their findings about Canada with their home country or their own experiences.

Follow-up assignments may include report writing or a comparison/contrast composition in which they compare lifestyles in Canada and the student's home country, drawing on examples from their interview.

"Fly Soup" from **Skits in English**
(not currently in print)

Collaborative Writing based on Cartoons and Pictures

- Using pictures and cartoons without text, such as that of "Fly Soup" from *Skits in English*. The activity enables students in small groups to discuss and create the story.

- Students may then write a 10 -12 line dialogue for the picture (or with lower level students, half of the dialogue may be provided and they will be required to complete it).

- Collaborative writing based on visual prompts opens up many opportunities for developing writing skills such as brainstorming vocabulary and ideas, creating dialogues, story writing and completion, asking questions, response and journal writing, imagining and writing scenarios, shar-

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Sociocultural theory perspective (continued)

(Continued from page 69)

ing personal stories.

There is a rich supply of such visuals and cartoons in ESL textbooks and materials, daily newspapers and internet sites such as: www.glasbergen.com and www.andertoons.com.

Community Activities

The following activities were developed with the ESL and LINC teachers of K-W English School in Kitchener-Waterloo during a professional development session in February 2005 (Han and Cummings, 2005).

We thank the K-W School teachers and coordinators for sharing their ideas.

- Students in small groups research buying a house. They go to Open Houses and report back on prices, types of housing, sizes, designs and plans, what you get for the money, decorating ideas, landscaping, fees, preferences and recommendations.

- A class of students creates a school Bulletin Board advertising For Sale and Wanted items.

- Students write class or school newsletters or e-letters with reviews of local restaurants and fast food spots, autobiographical stories, interviews of other students and staff, illustrations and cartoons, movie reviews and jokes.

- Students write children's stories from their own cultures and backgrounds, then combine them in a storybook with an accompanying tape of their reading for the school Day Care. They may also want to dramatize and present one of two of these stories for the children as skits.

- School and class recipe books

Conclusion

The activities in this paper exemplify an approach to language teaching that values collaborative learning according to sociocultural perspectives.

We acknowledge the research of Swain and Lapkin (1998) in helping to direct us towards the process of "co-construction of linguistic knowledge in dialogue...[for it truly demonstrates] language learning in progress." (p.321).

Jill Cummings and *Huamei Han* have extensive experience in teaching second languages to both children and adults. They are currently completing their Ph.D. dissertations in Second Language Education at OISE/University of Toronto. Jill also teaches in the TESL Certificate Program at Woodsworth/University of Toronto. Huamei teaches Expressive Writing at the University of Toronto/Mississauga.

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Creative lesson plans for intermediate and advanced students

Presented by Diana Catargiu, Lidija Nikolic, Juliet Daunt

The Gates *installation art in New York is the topic of an ESL lesson plan*

We created three lesson plans for intermediate and advanced level students at university, or for college-level international students.

The lesson plans can be easily adapted for LINC or community ESL programs and high school levels.

They can also be expanded or contracted to comprise an entire teaching unit. In addition, components of any of the lessons can be extracted and used as individual mini-lessons.

Our focus in building these lessons has been to develop learning activities that will engage the learners' creativity in personally meaningful ways.

Such activities are particularly helpful in creating a positive classroom atmosphere and lowering anxiety.

When we engage the creativity of second language learners we are also ac-

knowledging their true capacities for using language and their individuality.

The lessons will stimulate a lot of spontaneous speech and help learners to recognize that reading and writing are not separate from, and less rewarding than, speaking and listening but are instead equal in their power to spark communication.

Using contemporary art to teach ESL — by Diana Catargiu

Contemporary artwork can sometimes be controversial, and this makes it a great resource to use in the ESL classroom. Well-chosen controversial subjects are likely to generate a lot of discussion, one of our main goals when following a communicative language approach.

The lesson that follows was designed for high-intermediate or advanced ESL students.

"When we engage the creativity of second language learners we are also acknowledging their ... individuality"

Creative lesson plans (continued)

(Continued from page 71)

Although it is focused on reading, it will also stimulate speaking and some writing.

The main instructional goals are: skimming and scanning, describing objects, expressing personal opinions and acquiring new vocabulary.

The reading prompt I used is an adapted newspaper article entitled 'Passing the Gates,' published in the Visual Arts section of www.hour.ca on February 17, 2005.

The topic of the article is a piece of art entitled The Gates by two well-known contemporary artists: Christo and Jeanne-Claude.

The Gates was a large-scale project exhibited in Central Park, New York, at the beginning of 2005.

Many of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's works are created in and for an outdoor environment and are temporary, by design.

For example, they spent the 1980's and the 1990's creating a number of startling and unforgettable art pieces that caught international attention and were widely-covered in the media.

These included wrapping the Pont-Neuf in Paris in fabric and rope, planting blue umbrellas over a 12-mile-long valley in Japan, and wrapping the Reichstag in Berlin with 1.076 million square feet of silvery fabric and bright blue rope.

The materials required for the lesson are:

- Posters and art-prints of various works by Christo and Jeanne-Claude (including a poster of

The Gates)

- Adapted newspaper article, with a short introduction created by the teacher

- Exercises designed by the teacher

- Overhead projector

- Flipchart paper and markers

The lesson has seven main steps:

❶ Warm-up: Ask students to look at the posters and say the first word (one word only!) that comes to mind.

While the students say their words, the teacher writes them on flip-chart paper.

These words can be used in a writing activity or a communicative activity at the end of the lesson; for example, ask the students to look at the words again and decide whether they are still appropriate after having learnt more about the subject.

❷ Predicting: Ask students to read the introduction of the article and answer the following questions:

- Who are Christo and Jeanne-Claude?

- Why is their work special?

- What do you think the article is going to be about?

A conference participant also suggested discussing the title of the article before reading it, and trying to guess what the article was going to be about.

"The main instructional goals are: skimming and scanning, describing objects, expressing personal opinions and acquiring new vocabulary"

Creative lesson plans (continued)

Size and amount	Colours	Materials	Shapes	Environment

Table 1: categories for step 4

❻ Skimming: (What? Where? When?) The students receive three questions before their first reading of the article:

- What is the article about?

- What is the location of the event?

- When did the event happen?

❺ Scanning: This activity can be done individually or preferably in pairs.

The students are asked to fill in a table with details regarding *The Gates*. The details are grouped as demonstrated in Table 1.

Prepare an overhead visual of the table and record the students' suggestions.

As the content of the article can be quite abstract without a picture of the artwork, the teacher should refer to the illustration of *The Gates* for clarification.

❹ Vocabulary: Discuss new vocabulary with the whole class. Create a word-matching exercise.

❸ Writing: Have students choose one of the art prints available and, in their writing journals, write at least three paragraphs describing the picture. Encourage them to use the scanning exercise (table) as a guideline.

❼ Communicative Activities: These suggestions involve group work and group presentations.

- Ask students to imagine they are reporters and they are going to interview Christo and Jeanne-Claude. In groups, brainstorm questions for the artists and present the questions to the rest of the class.

- Organize a class debate: supporters vs. opponents of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's art.

- Discuss the significance of wrapping. Why do we wrap objects? What might have been the two artists' intentions when they wrapped certain buildings and bridges?

- This activity was also suggested by conference participants: As we have learnt, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's work involves a great amount of large-scale, environmental wrapping. Ask the students to think of a particular place or building they would like to wrap and explain why and how (what colours? what type of materials would you use?

- Invite students to tell about an artist or a work of art from their own culture and, if possible, show pictures of the artist's work.

Creative lesson plans (continued)

Size and amount	Colours	Materials	Shapes	Environment

Table 1: categories for step 4

(Continued from page 72)

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Creative lesson plans (continued)

Gadgets and inventions for pets
by Lidija Nikolic

This lesson plan is geared to intermediate young adults in a course in English for Academic Purposes. It is whimsical, relaxing and creative.

The stimulus material is an article by Vinay Menon, titled "Cat Sitter Hooks Satchel and Corduroy", which appeared in the *Toronto Star* on March 5, 2005.

The focus is on developing integrated reading, writing and speaking skills by challenging students to devise a new gadget or invention for a pet of their choosing.

The warm-up included a short discussion where general questions were asked about the North American penchant for treating pets as human beings.

> "*General questions were asked about the North American penchant for treating pets as human beings*"

The goal was to activate students' schemata on pets in anthropomorphic situations.

Activity 1 Students are given a set of Pet Cartoons and an activity card containing cartoon captions.

The students view the cartoons which depict pets engaged in activities we normally associate with people, and then match up the cartoon with an appropriate caption.

A couple of extra captions should be provided as distractors, to monitor students' comprehension.

Activity 2 Students are given a newspaper article and an adapted article. In adapting newspaper or magazine articles, teachers should simplify sentences, double-space the text, provide an accompanying glossary, and number the sentences in the margin for quick location and reference.

Creative lesson plans (continued)

(Continued from page 74)

Ask students to look at the original article's photos of cats watching TV, the captions and headline and the type of footage they would expect to see on a 'Cat Sitter' DVD. Students then skim the adapted article quickly for the gist of the story. Vocabulary questions can be taken up as a whole-class activity and answers written on the board.

Activity 3: Students brainstorm in groups to devise a new gadget or invention for a pet. Sample inventions should be passed out, each with a photo, cartoon and paragraph.

The students write a paragraph in the style of a newspaper article in which the new invention or gadget is presented to the public.

It should include a headline and a picture of the pet engaged in the activity. The invention should also describe what the pet may be thinking or feeling. One student from each group then presents their ideas to the rest of the class.

We have found that these kinds of activities stimulate students' creativity and they create some very amusing stories of gadgets and inventions.

Since the students find the activities fun, this lesson plan achieves its goals of reducing anxiety and providing an environment where learning new vocabulary and free communication is encouraged in reading, writing and speaking.

Inventing and marketing a product - by Juliet Daunt

The activity is to invent and develop a marketing plan for a product that will include an advertising jingle or slogan.

The goals for the learner include working effectively as a team to develop a marketing presentation, and using appropriate but dynamic language as they develop advertising jingles and slogans.

The goals for the instructor include establishing a learning environment that lowers anxiety and providing opportunities for spontaneous speaking and active listening.

Materials

- blackboard or whiteboard, actual patents, pens, pencils, paper, markers

Introduction to the lesson

Students should have done some prior research of advertising in print and in TV commercials so that they are familiar with the wide variety of possible marketing approaches and the types of language used to market products.

Discuss with the students some common features of the language used in advertising:

- variety in sentence structure.
- frequent use of emotional adjectives.
- overuse of some words

Develop a list of effective advertising language

As students read advertisements together, ask them to compile a list of emotional adjectives and any overused expressions that they find.

They can then use a dictionary or thesau-

> *"We have found that these kinds of activities stimulate students' creativity"*

Creative lesson plans (continued)

(Continued from page 75)

rus to develop their own lists of effective adjectives to incorporate into an advertisement.

Share some popular advertising jingles and slogans

Introduce some North American advertising jingles; for example "You deserve a break today" or " I'm lovin' it". Ask: "How many know what product I am talking about?"

Some students who haven't grown up in North America may not recognize the jingles. In that case, use schoolyard or religious songs that have simple or repetitive phrases.

Introduce some advertising slogans, for example: "Be all that you can be/In the army", or "There's no life like it.", or other slogans which appear in advertising that students have probably seen

Brainstorm new names for products

Patents – if you can, distribute copies of real but unusual patents for products and talk about the products – their use, possible advertising jingles or slogans.

Communicative activities

1. Form advertising teams. Each team must develop a marketing strategy for their brand new product. The product will need

- A name
- An advertising jingle
- A slogan

2. Create a radio ad or a voice over for a television commercial. You must include:
- An exciting description of the product using the list of emotional adjectives
- Already developed and incorporating the jingle and/or slogan text

- A promise about the product: e.g.; You will love it!, or
- A claim: e.g.; Product X is better than any other product, or
- A question implied or actually asked: e.g; why buy this?

One person from each group is asked to present the group's marketing ideas.

Activities for further lessons

This lesson can be adapted to any level and even for non - ESP classes. I have used it in a LINC program with immigrants, for example.

It is probably best given to a class whose members have spent some time together and are comfortable with one another.

The lesson ideas can be expanded to comprise part of a larger teaching unit on marketing or can be condensed to become a single lesson.

One variation: hand out a regular everyday item to each student, but hidden in a paper bag so that the students don't know which items the others received.

Each student must write a brief paragraph detailing the wonders of this everyday item (a pencil for example) without actually mentioning it by its normal name.

Learners can give it a special name if they wish. Display the paragraphs on the wall and have learners give creative names to other everyday items.

Diana Catargiu is a graduate of the University of Iasi, Romania, where she taught EFL for six years. *Juliet Daunt* graduated from the University of Victoria in Fine Arts, and has a Diploma in Theatre from the National Theatre School of Canada. She taught EFL in Spain in 2004-05. *Lidija Nikolic* graduated in English from York University and has a Certificate in Mechanical Engineering from George Brown College. All three are students in the TESL Certificate Program at the University of Toronto.

> *"The main instructional goals are: skimming and scanning, describing objects, expressing personal opinions and acquiring new vocabulary"*
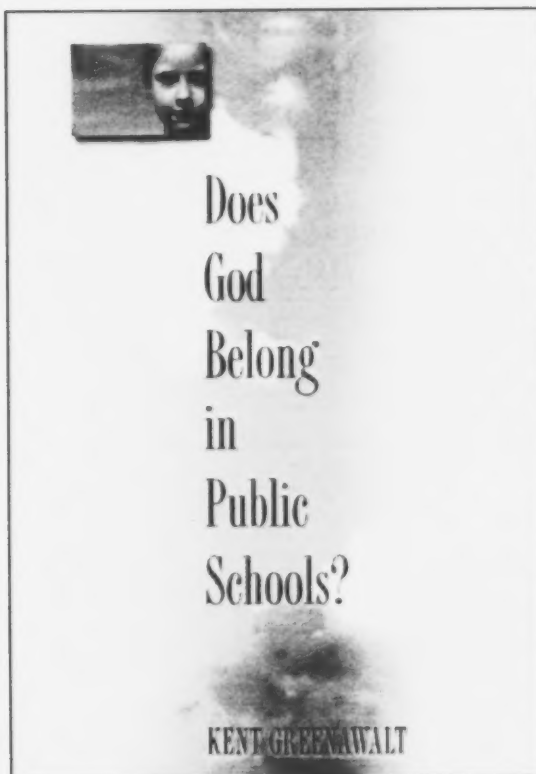
SPECIAL REPORT: 2005 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSION

Photo gallery: 2005 TESL Ontario conference

BOOK REVIEW:

Does God Belong in Public Schools?

By Robert Courchêne

Greenawalt, Kent (2005) Does God Belong in Public Schools? Princeton: Princeton University Press. 261p. (ISBN: 0-691-12111-7).

Scholars, especially in the U.S., are beginning to question the de facto separation of church and state in a world where decisions, proclamations and speeches are peppered with religions references and the mention of 'God'.

One of the many important contributions to this discussion has come from Kent Greenawalt, Professor of Law at Princeton University.

In this timely book, Greenawalt examines what place, if any, religion should play in public schools. He does this through a review of case law over the last half century.

The book is divided into four sections:

- History and purposes
- Devotions, clubs and teaching religion as true
- Teaching about religion
- Rights of students

In the period since 9/11, a large number of scholars have written about the role of religion in all aspects of public life - law, education, politics, military policy, the war in Iraq, ethical issues, moral values, terrorism, etc.

While 9/11 was certainly an important catalyst, this scholarship has been principally in response to the resurgence of religion in many parts of the world (according to author Karen Armstrong, Canada and Western Europe are exceptions).

After enumerating a list of the controversies that he will discuss in the book (e.g. prayer and bible reading, evolution, creationism and intelligent design, morals, civics and comparative religion), Greenawalt provides the reader with a brief history of the interface of religion and school with policy and practice, paying special attention to federal-state areas of jurisdiction.

The First Amendment of the U.S. constitution, stating that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establish-

Does God belong in public schools? (cont'd)

ment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" originally applied only to the decisions regarding federal powers.

Greenawalt traces how a series of rulings in the latter half of the 20th century led to the application of this amendment to the schools at the state level, eliminating in the process prayer at the beginning of the day as well as at graduations and other celebrations.

As a result, the non-denominational Protestant framework that grounded public schools at their inception in the 19th century was almost totally eroded.

In the second part of 'History and Purposes', Greenawalt reviews a wide array of issues about educational purposes, negative spillover effects, and the distribution of educational authority (different levels of government, school boards, individual teachers, parents and students).

The rest of the book is given over to a discussion of the "practical consequences of the various contending positions" (p.34).

Greenwalt's analysis of the different practical questions is clear, coherent and legal (as opposed to legalistic) making the book readily accessible to all interested parties.

He strongly supports the elimination of prayer from school celebrations while making an exception for the classroom Pledge of Allegiance as he sees this as a patriotic rather than a religious act.

A moment of silence at the beginning of the day or as part of celebrations is acceptable as long as it is not prefaced by a direct reference to God or an in-vocation to prayer.

He also sees the use of religious citations that form the part of an address as acceptable as long as their use is to support a point of view rather than to foster a specific religious point of view.

In talking about access to facilities within public schools, Greenawalt states that if a range of clubs have such access, religious clubs should have an equal opportunity, provided the school does not favour one group over another or provide support for a given group.

Greenawalt sees the possibility of controversy surrounding the 'what' and the 'how' of teaching religion in the schools.

He believes that the study of religions (as opposed to proselytising) presented in an objective way by well-trained teachers in harmony with the community context in no way infringes on the First Amendment.

Problems arise, however, when school boards and individual teachers violate this basic principle. School boards are certainly free to offer a Religions Course that covers the major faiths. In my opinion, Greenawalt could have cited more examples from a broader range of faiths.

Greenawalt devotes three chapters to the discussion of science and its relationship to religion, to creationism and the notion of 'intelligent design', and to the definition of religious teaching. For him, science can have both a positive and a negative effect on religion.

Scientific theories may "yield theories and particular conclusions that bear on the truth of religious proposi-

"For religion, science is a double-edged sword"

Does God belong in public schools? (cont'd)

tions" (p.98).

For example, the fact that the earth circles the sun and that science does not support creationism as a theory run contrary to most religious teachings.

Science on the other hand has conducted experiments demonstrating the power of prayer or the possible existence of miracles. For religion, science is a double-edged sword.

True to his principles, Greenawalt sees the teaching of creationism as the teaching of religion.

While recognizing that the existing theories of evolution cannot fully account for how people have evolved as a species, he is categorical in stating that "In its typical Genesis form, creation science does not belong in the science curriculum. Either it is non-science or very bad science. It does not present a reasonable scientific explanation of life on earth..." (p.115).

He would, however, not find the objective presentation of it in science as one possible view held by people concerning the origin of our species.

As regards intelligent design, he regards it as possibly being either complementary to or limiting of evolutionary theory, providing a partial expla-

> *"...he is categorical in stating that "In its typical Genesis form, creation science does not belong in the science curriculum"*

nation where evolutionary theory is wanting.

One wonders what Greenawalt's reaction would be to the court decision in Pennsylvania stating that intelligent design is not an acceptable alternate scientific theory.

In this debate, Greenawalt opts for a middle course, stating that the different sides are often less interested in considering what the other side has to say than in ridiculing their position.

In his discussion of the role religion plays and has played in other areas (history, economics) Greenawalt decries the reduced importance that it is given in today's society, clearly indicating that to understand why certain events took place or conflicts have erupted, one needs to consider religion.

For example, it was a force in the civil rights movement, a factor in shaping economic theory and the treatment of aboriginal peoples.

Religion must be given an equal place in explaining phenomena rather than being excluded in many secular-based explanations of phenomena.

In the last section of the book, he deals with the rights of students and parents concerning the teaching of religion in the schools: freedom of religious

Does God belong in public schools? (cont'd)

choice, students being able to withdraw from specific classes or courses that negatively affect their religious convictions (sex education, evolution or creationism), freedom of speech regarding religious issues, and input into the curriculum (choice of texts for a course).

In most cases, he errs on the side of caution.

Students who have legitimate religious objections should not be forced to attend specific classes. School boards should, within limits, try to accommodate the parent's viewpoint concerning text selection or point of view on given topics.

Greenawalt has provided us with an overview of the intersection of religion and a number of issues in the classroom.

To a great extent, he agrees with the decisions of the different American courts on the practical application of the law.

While moderation is what one would expect, I would have liked to see a more radical and innovative approach to certain of the topics that he discusses.

The separation of church and state exists in law, but in the day-to-day lives of ordinary Americans (and, increasingly, Canadians) religion is moving back into the public sphere.

The separation has been blurred: we need to admit this and to re-examine in a more in-depth manner the existing relationship.

Finally, in reading Greenawalt's book, one becomes increasingly aware of the extent to which the courts are making and interpreting the law in the US (a trend that also is on the rise in Canada).

When citizens disagree with any given law, they go to the courts, rather than to the members of their legislative bodies to have it changed.

Given this situation, one should not be surprised how the appointment of Supreme Court judges is so hotly debated in the United States.

From the courts, whether favourable or unfavourable, they are guaranteed to receive a decision.
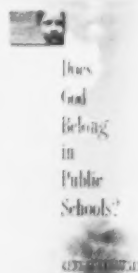
TITLE: *Does God Belong in Public Schools?*

AUTHOR: Greenawalt, Kent (2005)

PUBLISHER: Princeton: Princeton University Press. 261p. (ISBN: 0-691-12111-7).

"I would have liked to see a more radical and innovative approach"

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